SHE LOVED A SAILOR

AMELIA E. BARR

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She Loved a Sailor

By

AMELIA E. BARR

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SHE LOVED A SAILOR.

CHAPTER I.

LOVE AS A SAILOR.

"Far, far upon the sea,
The good ship speeding free,
Upon the deck we gather, young and old,
And view the flapping sail,
Spreading out before the gale,
Full and round, without a wrinkle or a fold;
Or watch the wave's that glide
By the stately vessel's side,
And the wild sea birds that follow through the air;
Oh! gayly goes the ship when the wind blows fair!"

"Follow, follow, round the earth,
The green earth and the sea;
So love is with the lover's heart,
Wherever he may be."

WHEN the very old men of this generation were very young men, some of them may have stood upon the banks of the East River and watched the "Arethusa" come flying in before the wind, her deck crowded with home-coming Americans, and the English mail safe in her hold. She was a favorite packet ship in those days when Andrew Jackson reigned at

Washington and William the Fourth sat on the throne of England; when the names of Calhoun and Benton, Clay and Webster, were on every American's lips; and in England a young man called Disraeli was beginning to be spoken of as a successful novelist and a very unsuccessful politician.

On September the eleventh, A. D. 1833, the "Arethusa" was approaching the American shore. The sky and the sea were exquisitely serene, and a tone of happy expectancy and pleasant preparation filled the ship all day with movement, with eager calls for attention, and with hurried, smiling salutations. But with the deepening twilight and the uprising moon, there fell upon the little floating world a growing stillness. For tranquillity and darkness are the powers that call forth the hidden sweetness of life; and this is specially so at sea, when the waters are brooding in the calm, celestial light of the moon.

Some of the passengers leaned over the taffrails, smoking and talking softly; others sat dreaming of incoherent and mysterious things. The deep hush of the fathomless, colorless waste of waters dulled all minds; ideas were few and slow. It was the hour of the heart, and, if intellect were busy at all, its conceptions were unsubstantial as the woof of dreams.

The night was warm, the ship jogging

quietly along, and there was not a sail in sight. Several ladies were on deck, and the beautiful Virginia Mason was walking silently with the Captain. Frequently he cast his eyes down upon her fair face and tall, graceful figure. In the mystical moonlight she looked like a vision. He might have been walking in a dream, so fateful and irresistible was the spell that bound him. Speech was as impossible as it was useless and hopeless. For though Captain Bradford, on the deck of his own ship, might offer his arm to Virginia Mason, he knew that when he had brought her safely to her native land, his opportunity was over. She would remember him only as one who had served her well; but he,—he must carry in his heart, till its last faint beat, the memory of her loveliness and sweetness.

These were always his first thoughts when he saw her; but it was very rarely that second thoughts did not bring with them that confidence which springs from conscious desert and inextinguishable hope. He loved her with no fancied or simulated passion. At the first moment when she charmed his eyes, he gave to her his whole heart; and instantly all the lighter loves of his past years were hateful in his memory. Hope, renunciation, and despair had made the three weeks of the voyage a lifetime of joy and torture. It was nearly over. To-morrow they might part forever.

The thought gave him a desperate courage. He walked to the stern of the ship, and they sat down there. She let him fold a rug for her feet and clasp her cloak round her throat, and the service was such honor that it set him upon the pinnacle of joy. All that he had thought to say vanished from his mind; he was silent, but it was a silence penetrated with his personality and his longing.

"Look at the men in the rigging, Captain. They go creeping about like men in a dream. What are they doing?"

"The wind is rising; they are spreading the canvas; we shall soon be strutting with the breeze. It has brought into our wake a strange vessel."

"I see her. How she spreads her wings and flies toward us!"

"If the breeze lasts, we shall doubtless be in New York to-morrow. Is that good news?"

His voice was passionately sad. She could not but lift her eyes, and his eyes met hers with a question in them she had often asked herself—a question hard to answer; she had been afraid to bring it to argument. But the strength of Love's reason lies in its despite of reason. Virginia's lover was most eloquent, because she divined that for her sake he was silent.

She looked shyly at him. He was exceed-

ingly handsome, and his blue uniform, with its ornaments of gold braid and buttons, set off finely a tall, well-knit figure, supple and strong and full of manly grace. He had a large countenance tanned with wind and sun; and on his clustering curls of short brown hair rested the gold band of the sailor's cap which partially covered them. But it was not these physical advantages, so much as his simple frankness, his modest *naïveté*, his blunt downrightness to men, and his courteous gallantry to women, which had touched both Virginia's fancy and sympathy on their very best side.

So she looked up at the question, and then looked far off to sea to answer it. "It is partly good news. I shall be very sorry to leave the 'Arethusa'; I shall be very glad to see my home again."

"Will you remember the ship?"

"I think I shall go sailing in her through many a happy dream."

"And shall I be her captain?"

He spoke in a whisper, and, as Virginia did not immediately answer, his heart failed him, and the personal pride which was his weak point chilled the sensitive current in which both had been drifting to the same happy point. Virginia was instantly conscious of the change. She shivered slightly, and said: "The wind is really rising. It will be better for me to go down-stairs."

Then the Captain set his lips firmly, and gave her his arm. He thought she understood and reproved him, and he was too honest-hearted to cover his sorrow and chagrin with meaningless words. In absolute silence he led her to the foot of the companion-way, and then, lifting his cap, he bowed the "adieu" he could not find heart to utter. It was a most unhappy parting, promising to both a wakeful and miserable night.

Major Thomas Mason was sitting with a number of gentlemen, who were discussing with great warmth the policy of President Jackson. He rose when his daughter appeared, and supported her to the door of her state-room. Fortunately, she had no companion; she could slip the bolt and be alone with the strange, wistful longing and sorrow that invaded her. "Is this love?" She asked her heart the question, and felt it sweetly beating the answer in every throbbing pulse. Involuntarily she smiled, and the light that spread over her face was the light she had caught from her lover's face as they walked the deck together.

"He is so true! so great in all things! And he loves me; I fill his life! He is thinking of me now! In the morning I will speak kindly to him! I will give him something to do for me! I will make him happy!"

In the morning the kind intent was still

stronger. She could not dismiss the face, at once so imploring and despairing, which had set itself in the gloom of the companion-way the previous evening—the face of the man that loved her. She had had no intention of making him miserable, but the things we do from design are of small account compared with those which we do beyond our forethought.

She went on deck very early, while as yet the damp, fresh air had in it the flavor of brine. Her heart was troubled and sad; she knew little of it; the secret thoughts of love were all unexplored; her experience had revealed nothing to her. She stood looking at the gray-green waves, and the gulls above them seeking with cold dull eyes their dead prey. The fog was still in the beards of the sailors, and they were moving about the deck and the rigging in a quiet, mournful way.

She speedily began to feel as if she had been too eager in her kindness. There was a tumult of indecision in her heart. She drew her cloak tightly around her, as if by so doing she could draw herself from all outward influences. Then she saw Captain Bradford coming toward her, He was not conscious of her presence, and he was carrying his head high, with an indifferent, domineering look. It was the mask behind which he was hiding his sense of failure, but Virginia could not know this, and his face

frightened her a little, and made her more cautious than she had intended to be.

Marius felt her glance instantly and he came quickly to her side; his face fresh and damp with sea fog, but stamped with the mystical self-signature of a man who knew how to subjugate his will, and be Cæsar unto himself. Virginia had for a moment a womanly fear that she had lost her influence over him; his influence over her had never been so pronounced. He was not only a part of her own vague longings and unrest, but the prodigious disquiet of the ocean—the rustling of the salt air—the bitter spray—the veiling fog—the everlasting threat of stormy winds—were the atmosphere in which she set this Sailor on the Sea, absolute within the bounds covered by the white sails that were spread or furled at his command.

The authoritative manner, seen but for a moment, had conquered her, as power of any kind conquers. And of all professions, that of a sailor touches the heart and the imagination of women most deeply. The gay uniform of the soldier, his sword and rifle and martial music, may win a passing favor; but woman's deepest enthusiasm is for the sailor in his constant warfare with illimitable and mysterious forces. He comes before her mind in a thousand heroic, picturesque situations, the embodiment of all that is tender and gallant and brave.

It seemed almost as if the lovers had at the moment of their meeting changed feelings. Virginia was timid and embarrassed, the Captain reflected the despotic moods of the long, wakeful night. During it he had frequently told himself that he would accept the position to which Virginia's refusal to answer his pregnant question relegated him. He must always love her, but he would so far honor his love as to hide it in his heart. When next it asked recognition there must be a certainty it would find a favorable answer.

Virginia advanced a step or two to meet him, and put out her small gloved hand. He looked at her with shining eyes, and clasped the suggestive peacemaker with an honest fervor. They walked thus to the stern of the vessel, and stood there gazing at the white wake and the sea gulls.

"I have been watching them," said Virginia. "They seem so indifferent to everything but eating; at that they labor imperturbably."

"I do not like to see them in such numbers. When the gulls spread their wings it is time for the ship to furl hers. There are men on every ship that believe them to be the spirits of drowned sailors."

"I think they are the air and the sea and the elements which have taken wings to themselves. They never can have been human and

loved anything. Look at their eyes, so stern and cold and cruel!"

"I have seen human eyes like them. There was a gull that haunted a ship I knew. The captain swore it was a dead mate whom he had hated. Day after day he tried to shoot it. He never could."

"Now I can feel why you do not permit the passengers to fire at them."

"It is very unlucky; no doubt about it. Who can tell how or where the soul loses itself on its long journey upward? You will call this the most illogical of talk. I often think things I do not pretend to understand. The sun will drive away the mist soon, and we shall see land all around us. Then it will be the parting word, Miss Mason. Is it to be forever? I think you should answer me that question."

"It is not to be forever, Captain Bradford." She drew a narrow strip of pink silk from her glove, and said:

"I bought a dress like this at Burton's, on Bold Street, Liverpool. I want two yards more of the same silk. Will you bring it on your next voyage?"

"If there is any silk like it in England, I will bring it when I come again."

"Our house is near Great Jones Street; that is a long way. Will you bring it to the house, or shall I send to the ship for it?"

"If your house was at the end of the world, I would gladly bring it in my own hands."

"Then we shall meet again. Here is the sunshine, and the fog is turning to a golden haze, and hark! how that man huddled up in the 'waist' is singing." They listened a few moments, and then the Captain hummed gayly:

A sailor's life is the life for me;
He takes his duty merrily.
If winds can whistle, he can sing,
Ready for all the sea can bring.
Beloved by mates, he loves his ship,
And toasts his girl, and drinks his flip;
And this is the life of a sailor.

The melody was simple and monotonous, and Virginia swayed gently to its time and movement. But the sense of land was momentarily growing stronger; the passengers were full of exclamations and excitement; two news-boats were shouting for English papers, and a pilot waiting to be taken on board. The Captain could no longer delay. He looked at her steadily, and said:

"I may not be able to see you again at this time. If I hoped you would remember!"

"I will forget nothing." And she held his gaze for a moment with the soft brilliance of her own. In that flash each saw a vision of things invisible to others. Both were under an influence too strong and sweet to be resisted, and it said to both alike, "Do all your

heart tells you. Remember how *august* it is. It contains the temple of love and of conscience, and a whisper is heard from the extremity of one to the extremity of the other."

The day afterward was long and wearisome. They were in sight of New York; they were in the midst of vessels and schooners and coast steamers passing to and fro with swaggering turmoil; but many delays retarded their progress, and it was nearly sunset when the "Arethusa" cast anchor at her slip on the East River. The Captain was on the gangway. He bid Major Mason a courteous farewell, and lifted his cap once more to the girl who took his heart and hopes with her. A carriage was in waiting; there was a sudden lifting of her head. It was like a last tender thought. Then, for a moment, Captain Marius Bradford felt as if life was over.

CHAPTER II.

JANE KETELTAS.

"How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!"

"O Mother Holland! true and deep,
Below all fresher loves we keep
A thought of thee;
Though generations come and go,
A thought that still will burn and glow
In memory.
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!"

IT had begun to rain when they left the ship, and before their home in the upper part of the city was reached they were in the midst of the storm. But ere morning it had rained its passion away, and the day broke sunny and clear-skied. Major Mason's residence was one of those square Georgian houses, with large, lofty rooms, which were so emblematical of the solid days in which they were the fashion. These rooms were full of handsome furniture, and the wide stairway of carved wood rose boldly up from the broad central hall. There was a small garden at the northern end of the house, and a much larger

one behind it, and upon its fragrant space the breakfast parlor opened.

Here Virginia found her father when she came down-stairs the next morning. He was standing on the hearthrug with a newspaper in his hand. The south wind blowing in through the open window brought with it a fresh scent from the wet, late flowers; and the whole room had that air of refinement and comfort which comes from a fine sense of its purpose. Everything seemed to belong to it specially, from the large open secretary to the small round table with its white damask cloth and its service of pink china and sterling silver.

"Good morning, dear father! How delicious is the earthy smell of the garden!"

"Very—after so much brine and"—he was going to say bilge-water; but he looked at his daughter, and could not utter a word with an uncleanly association in her presence.

With small white hands she was rearranging the pink cups and saucers and the shining silver. Her dress of fawn *chali* fell in long, soft folds to her sandaled feet. A deep collar of embroidered India muslin encircled her throat, and cuffs of the same were turned back at the wrists to confine the large sleeves. Her brown hair was braided down each side of the face in *berthes*, and fastened high on her head with a large Spanish comb of shell; and the

knots of pink ribbon which brightened the whole costume gave her a fresh and cherry atmosphere, like that which surrounds a tree of living roses.

"You are fresh as a flower, Virginia."

"You too, sir, look very well; yet there is a worry-line across your brow. Is anything wrong, father?"

"Wrong! Everything is wrong. President Jackson seems to think he knows how to manage the purse of the country as well as he knew how to wield the sword of the country. Nicholas Biddle——"

"Oh! that old Bank quarrel; I thought you had argued that question out on the 'Arethusa' to the very last letter. I heard Mr. Kane say that Jackson was an autocrat—a tyrant—an irresponsible czar—a——"

"Nonsense! Kane, indeed! How can Kane, or any mere civilian, judge President Jackson? When the people made him President again, they must have known, from all his past career, that he would always rule like a commander-in-chief."

"I cannot understand why he, being President of the United States, should wage war on the United States Bank."

"My dear Virginia, can you understand why the Bank should wage war upon the Government? The fact that it is doing so is proof positive of the evil of the institution. Political

power ought to be regulated by the will of the people. Can you imagine President Jackson permitting any monetary consolidation to usurp the right of the people? He will give every member of it military law first."

"President Jackson's law, you mean?"

"Yes, Miss, President Jackson's law."

"Father, I am a little tired of President Jackson. Doubtless he is a great man, and doth bestride our whole country like a Colossus, but I am far more interested in our trunks; and I was talking to Mrs. Duane last night about the house, and she says the drawing-room needs a new carpet."

"When stocks rise, and rents are paid; but in the mean time, Virginia,——" and he shook his handsome head mournfully to express the alternative. Then a servant entered with breakfast, and, while he busied himself with its arrangement, father and daughter stood together, and Major Mason let his eyes fall once more upon the offensive article he had been reading.

Above their heads was an old picture, the likeness of one Geoffrey Mason, who had fled for conscience sake to the Plymouth Colony in A. D. 1676, and who had been the founder of the American branch of the family. The resemblance between the men was remarkable, though they were altogether dissimilar. Geoffrey Mason had possessed all the bluff red-

and-white comeliness which is the sign of the Anglo-Saxon race. But for a century after his settlement, constant attrition with adverse forces, spiritual and temporal, had been a refining and sharpening process. The spirit threw off with each generation a portion of its fleshly swaddling bands, and the Masons, without losing their lofty stature, grew spare and muscular. In this refinement the intellectual life also shared; it had become, as it were, *oxidized* in the elements of struggle and conquest which marked the beginnings of American empire. Indeed, the word "oxidized" fitted the change very well, for though the keener life represented by oxygen had been largely assimilated, the combination had seldom produced an acid nature among them.

In the beginning of the past century another Geoffrey Mason left his rocky farm in Massachusetts, and sought in New York a wider arena. He made a little money, which his son Arthur increased a thousand-fold. Then the grandson John had time and means for study and travel, and the great-grandson Thomas had inherited all the advantages of the four generations popularly supposed necessary for the evolution of a gentleman.

Thomas had military instincts, and they had been well nurtured by an association with General Jackson in his most brilliant campaigns. However, as the enthusiasm of youth evapo-

rated, other instincts, equally strong, asserted themselves. He thought that it was entirely for his wife's and daughter's sake he so early abandoned military life; but in reality his tastes led him to be a *dilettante* patron of music and art, an observer of men, and a tireless reader of books.

On his father's death he sold the Mason residence near the Battery, and build for himself the much more splendid house in which he now stood by his daughter's side grumbling at those malcontents who did not echo the opinions of his favorite hero. The building of this mansion had not escaped the notice of that Fate which so often demands a sacrifice for homes that are monuments to accumulated wealth and human pride. The Masons had scarcely entered it when the sacrifice was required. Mrs. Mason was said to have taken a cold and died from an inflammation. But who has the oracle of their death? What human prescience has foreseen the spot of earth on which the soul must go to meet its fate? Be it near at hand, or far, far off, there is a Destiny or a Nemesis in it beyond our understanding.

Such thoughts were not strange to Major Mason's mind, but at this hour he was altogether occupied by the political aspects of his time. And as he stood beneath his ancestor, the mysterious influence of lineage was re-

markably clear, though its source was too subtle to bear definition. Perhaps it was hidden in the broad brow, or the large, round, open eye which both alike possessed; or in that peculiar expression called into all faces where political or national questions put personal ones aside.

Father and daughter sat down to their breakfast with a flash of intelligent gratitude. The country might be going to ruin, but the sense of home was sweet; and the coffee and the fish and the steak and hot biscuit considerably modified the Major's ideas of its possible salvation. After all, New York was to be relied on; he could always put his trust in his native city. Then he remembered that in coming from the packet he had noticed a great blank on Chatham Street. He had been told that there was to be a large hotel built there; and he reminded Virginia of the circumstance.

"As I go to the Custom House, I shall see what changes have been made, and call upon some friends in Park Place," he said.

"And as unpacking is out of the question to-day, I will go and see Jane Keteltas."

"Give my respects to her father. I dare say he is all nose at present, following Jackson like a sleuth-hound. But he is a very good son of old Holland. Tell him we have been there, and that it stands just where it did."

John Paul Keteltas lived much further north than the Masons; in fact, his house, though now in the center of the city, was then in the suburbs. It was a commodious wooden dwelling, surrounded by maple trees, and standing in the midst of a fair garden. This morning it was gay with dahlias and marigolds, and the wide Dutch porch was a mass of red and blue morning glories.

Jane, sitting at an upper window, had seen the approach of her friend, and was standing at the open gate to meet her. She was a small but strikingly handsome girl, with a brilliant color, and a great quantity of very light hair. Her manner was warm and impulsive, and her large gray eyes were brimming with sensibility and willfulness.

They went hand-in-hand into a parlor off the main hall—a large room, very somberly furnished, with an antiquated oak sideboard, very much carved, and almost black with age. There were chairs to match it, and a large table, and a Friesland cuckoo clock, with its silver-sounding chimes. At the table a man of sixty years of age was sitting. He had white hair and a fresh color in his cheeks. His coat, of a precise cut, had a high standing collar, and he wore a neckcloth of India muslin, folded with an extreme exactness.

He was writing and examining documents, some loose like open bills, others folded in the

long, business-like suggestiveness of leases and contracts. Virginia's entrance seemed to give him pleasure ; he pushed aside his papers and put his elbows on the table, in order to question her more comfortably. After a variety of inquiries, he asked the name of the packet on which they had come, and when Virginia said the "Arethusa," he uttered a significant "Humph-h!" and looked at his daughter, who at the same moment threw up her pretty hands, with an exclamation :

"Eh, what did you say? The 'Arethusa'? Was Captain Nigel Forfar on her?"

"I saw him frequently, sir; and my father talked with him. But he was either very proud or very shy ; he kept much to himself."

"Proud! Well, I can imagine it. The Forfars are the first-born of all creation, in their own opinion. There's no remedy for pride, my dear, when it is born in a man. But shy? Pray why should he be shy? He was in the army until his father went the way of all flesh. Did you notice, my dear, if he was—like me, for instance?"

Virginia laughed merrily. "Oh, no, sir; not at all. He is very dark and swarthy, and thin, and tall."

"But not disagreeable, eh! my dear?"

"Indeed, sir, he is quite handsome, but he was not a favorite ; so domineering and ill-tempered was he."

"The Forfars are masterful; Nigel's father had that way with him; they like to be first whatever will come of it, or wherever they are."

"But on a packet ship that could not be, sir."

"Not on the 'Arethusa,' Captain Marius Bradford commanding. For he is a born autocrat when he gets men and women in his power. I know! I know! I have crossed twice with him, and I have heard him say, do this and do that, and go there and come here. The Roman centurion must have been a mild-spoken gentleman in comparison. That's what I say."

Virginia was red as a rose, and she looked at him with eyes so full of contradiction that he understood her unspoken denial, and added, with an air of candor:

"But he's very polite to ladies, and he minded his ship well, and he met a storm as if he was delighted to see it. Doubtless there are worse men afloat than Marius Bradford."

"Father sent his respects to you, Mr. Keteltas, and said I was to tell you that Holland stands where she did."

"Generally speaking, that is perhaps true. Holland is not moved with every wind of doctrine or politics that blows. It is not her mission to be a weathercock for other nations to take warning by. Saw you Amsterdam, my dear?"

"Yes, sir. I shall always see at the naming of the word the long, black band of buildings stretching out——"

"Under a gray-blue sky of wonderful softness, eh?"

"And the thousands of roofs and gables, and above them the steeples and church towers, with their campaniles and dark balustrades."

"And the thousands of windows framed in white, some leaning forward and some backward, eh, my dear?"

"And the great spreading trees shielding the massive slips and gateways like a wall of verdure, sir?"

"And the grave, solid-looking men on the streets, and the sailors on the quays, with their legs hanging over them, all silent and motionless, smoking, smoking, smoking."

"And the ringing of the church bells above the city like music in mid-air, and the fresh wind blowing from the North Sea, sir?"

"O Amsterdam! fair Amsterdam! And there, also, my dear, you would hear the good Dutch?"

"Yes, sir. I did not understand it, but my father said it was a very fine language."

"My dear, the finest of all the Gothic dialects; rich, strong, sonorous."

"Very sonorous, sir; but——"

"Listen to me. I must say you a verse of

the good Jacob Westerbaen, and you shall confess it is a very suitable one :

> " ' Moe gewandelt, moe geseeten,
> Moe gedronken, moe gegeeten,
> Moe te gast gaen alle daegh,
> Bij de vrienden in den Haegh,
> Raeckt—ik weder op mijn Huisje.' "

"Indeed, sir, wonderfully sonorous; it sounds as if the tongue beat its words out on a silver anvil. Now you must also translate for me."

John Paul was delighted with the task. He was at his best when his nature was set to the tune of "Holland." His rosy face shone with pleasure, his blue eyes had a veiled and softened look, his voice had tones in it which would have made his familiars in Wall Street speculate and doubt and wonder, as the translation fell with the proper spirit and inflections from his lips :

> Tired with wandering, tired with sitting,
> Tired with drinking, tired with eating,
> Tired with every busy plague,
> Feasting, visiting the Hague,
> Here again I find a dwelling.

Then he was himself a little ashamed of his emotion so early in the morning, with all those vouchers and mortgages at his finger tips. Yet he was diviner for these few moments, though the great goddess *Utilitaria*, whom John Paul Keteltas worshiped, brought him sharply back to the legitimate business of the hour.

"Now go away with Jane, my dear," he said, drawing his papers quickly under his eyes. "Jane is wondering if I have lost my senses, I see that. Go away, go away!"

They went up-stairs together, hand-in-hand, leaning toward each other with low, loving words and smiles. For they were true soul-sisters, and their affection was not likely to change with circumstances nor to fade away with absence. Virginia had come with a long story to tell of her travels and experience, but all events seemed tame beside the unexpected visit of Captain Nigel Forfar.

"Before old Mr. Forfar died, there was, I know, some correspondence between him and my father about me," said Jane, as she began to lay out a dress of pale green silk, with a pelerine of white lace.

"About you, Jane?"

"Yes. Father had an extraordinary liking for the old man. They had been playfellows and schoolfellows, and there must have been other ties. Why, father loaned him money when he wished to buy the plantation next his own, and I feel sure they had a plan of marriage between Nigel Forfar and myself."

"So now Nigel Forfar is coming to look at you. That is not a pleasant thought, Jane. If I were you, I would refuse to see him."

"Father will insist upon my receiving him; and I rather think I shall like to do so; but if

he is as haughty and ill-natured as you say, I can play that game with him. The Forfars, you see, are a very old Southern family; and father says they were once earls of Forfar. Forfar is in Scotland, I think."

"Nonsense, Jane. I do not believe it. And suppose they were? The dead and gone Forfars are nothing to you, and as for the living one, I think little of him. You know, Jane, at sea a man's real character is apt to show itself, and Captain Forfar was selfish and ill-tempered and domineering."

"Then would you wear this lovely dress for him, Virginia?"

"You may. I do not think he ever sees anything beyond his own shadow. It is really a lovely dress; it looks quite Parisian."

"It is Parisian. Mrs. Bond bought it for me on the Rue Rivoli, and I have all the proper accessories, even to the complexion of my shoe-strings."

Then they drifted into a conversation which, however far it diverged, came back constantly to the "Arethusa" and Nigel Forfar. Jane was much more interested on the latter subject than she would permit either Virginia or herself to believe; for she was a lonely girl, cut off by her father's ideas and economies from many of the social pleasures that were part of every-day life to her friend.

"And I am twenty-two, Virginia," she said

plaintively, "and have never had an offer of marriage. I should like to have one, even if I felt it right to refuse it." She was dressing her fair hair in a lofty coronal on the top of her head as she spoke, and she could not help displaying its thick, rippling lengths, glossy and shining and full of vitality.

At the dinner-table the unusual splendor of her dress caused no remark. Keteltas understood far too well the times when speech or silence would be the golden rule; and he felt that if he twitted Jane about their expected visitor, she might make the visitor suffer for it, the tendency of human nature being to pass onward any snub it receives.

The afternoon, in spite of all there was to tell and to speculate about, was a trifle exhausting. The sense of "watching" took the sparkle out of conversation. Virginia also had a thought she could not share. The love which Marius Bradford had scarcely dared to breathe she could not gossip about without a sense of profanation. She had not even talked of it with her own heart. It was, so far, a sacred mystery, divined but not interpreted—a new-born emotion, which had not yet found its speech.

Toward the close of her visit she suddenly remembered her friend's brother.

"I have not asked after Harry. Where is he now?"

"At New Brunswick, in the theological school. Father says he must be a minister. They are simply trying to turn an eagle into an owl. Harry ought to have gone to West Point. Poor Harry! I feel very foolish, Virginia, in my silk and lace; wait until I take them off, and I will walk part of the way home with you."

"No, no! You must not have a disappointment in your pretty dress. If you take it off, Nigel Forfar is sure to come while you are looking your very worst. Some malicious sprite whispered that in your ear. Wear your dress till you get your desire, for if you begin giving way to things you never know where you may be carried. Upon my word, Jane, you are a very pretty girl; but I really hope Captain Forfar may not be of my mind."

She kissed Jane with these words, and left her standing under the porch. Her shoulders and arms were covered only with lace, and she gave a visible shiver as she turned in with a farewell gesture. Virginia had a sympathetic chill, and she hurried her steps a little, being conscious of approaching change, and having a natural instinct of home in its first uncertainty.

Major Mason was already there. He was dressed for dinner, and had a copy of the New York "Mirror" in his hand. But he was

discussing with the butler the quantity of wine in the cellar, and the subject was too interesting to be suddenly dropped. She allowed him to thoroughly talk it out, and then said:

"Captain Forfar, whom we met on the 'Arethusa,' is to visit Mr. Keteltas."

"I should not have thought it."

"Jane says her father and his father were playfellows and friends; and that she believes there is an intention of marriage in the gentleman's mind if she fills his ideal."

"I hope he will find her wanting. I think Jane deserves a better husband. I understood he was from Tennessee. Why does he come to New York by way of England?"

"He went from New Orleans to Europe, and has been there on a pleasure trip. I suppose Jane is business, and he comes home by New York to arrange his marriage."

"I am astonished at Keteltas, and yet not so. Keteltas has a strong vein of romance running through his practical nature. I think if he loved the father he is capable of continuing his love to the third or fourth generation. How does Jane take to the arrangement?"

"She likes it. Jane is romantic, and her life has been very quiet. She is in love with the ideal man, I can see that. All the good qualities Forfar lacks she will invent for him; all his bad ones she will ignore. Jane told me that Colonel Burr was married to Madame

Jumel last July; and Miss Douglas is married also; Henry Inman is painting a fine picture of her. Jane was at Long Branch a short time this summer, and she says it is becoming a fashionable resort. What have you seen to-day, father?"

"The sunniest, breeziest, liveliest city under the sun. I have been down to the Battery, and across to Hanover Square. Nothing except an Italian sky could have been bluer than the sky above New York to-day; and the bright red of the brick houses, and the golden green of the trees, and all the stir and color of the Broadway crowd, was enchanting."

"I wish I had been with you, father."

"I stood on the Battery some time, and looked at the slanting sails of the great packets on the horizon, and the red and black smoke-stacks of the crafts puffing and paddling about the river, and the great ferryboats toiling between shores. Everything, everywhere, was moving—moving fast. Even the man calling 'ice-cream' was out of sight before I could get the twopenny piece I wanted to give him for the sake of the familiar cry."

"Yet Jane says more than three thousand people died from cholera last summer. I dare say they were not missed in the crowd."

"To the sight they are not, but the heart picks out the empty places. In many stores I found vacancies that represent broken homes,

and losses never to be repaired. We left New York just in time to escape the epidemic and the presidential election."

"Are there many changes on Broadway?"

"Some new buildings, and I am told that Mr. Astor is going to pull down all the houses between Barclay and Vesey Streets, and build a grand hotel there. It is to cost him six hundred thousand dollars."

"Will it pay?"

"If he makes it splendid enough. Really, Virginia, New York is fonder of display than any Old World city we have visited."

"New York has plenty of money; she is open-handed, and likes to spend it. Were there many ladies out?"

"The lower part of Broadway was crowded with open carriages full of ladies shopping. And how pretty our women are! Under their large gay bonnets and bright-colored parasols their delicate faces looked like flowers. I stood at the Park awhile and watched them passing; it was easy to recognize those I knew, for the carriages were constantly getting tangled up with the hurrying carts and drays, and the omnibuses racing and rolling up and down the crowded thoroughfare."

"Oh, the omnibuses! Are they still running?"

"They have been redecorated. The 'Lady Washington' and the 'Lady Jackson' outvie

each other in pictured beauty in scarlet and yellow and apple-green. And the arrogance of their drivers is something wonderful. They think the street belongs to them. If we have an autocrat in America, the omnibus driver is the man."

"You forget King Andrew Jackson!"

"The cases are not comparable. As for Jackson being an autocrat, we had better have one autocrat, than half a dozen. What could the country do with Clay, Webster, Calhoun, Benton, and Nicholas Biddle? We ought to be grateful that we have one man stronger than all of them, and able to keep them in order."

"Can Jackson do that?"

"He can do it. There is no living man whose 'yea' can stand against Jackson's 'nay.' But when he comes to fighting ideas instead of men, that is a different thing. I met Mr. Jonas Hale in the Park, and went with him to Tappan's store to buy some silk. There is an 'idea' brooding in that man's mind that no one will ever put down. It will carry all before it."

"What do you mean, father?"

"Liberty. Emancipation."

"Abolition?"

"Yes. The Tappans are possessed by it. They are the little leaven hid in the measure of meal. You can't buy a yard of silk without

feeling it. Arthur Tappan's face was fairly illumined when he spoke of the recent emancipation of the English slaves in the West Indies. It was an irritating text to preach from. We do not want England to set us examples. I quite lost my temper on the subject. The opera is a pleasanter one. The new house is to be opened in November, and I have bought one-third of a box for this winter. Fanti is the prima donna."

He rose with these words, and lifted a magazine.

"It is a new American venture," he said critically, reading aloud the contents.

"What is it called?"

"The 'Knickerbocker.' I think I shall adhere to my 'Mirror.' The 'Knickerbocker' promises too much. Do you wish to go out this evening, Virginia?"

"No, sir. I am very weary."

"Then I shall take a quiet hour or two with my books. I have also a fresh installment of 'Pickwick Papers.'"

"And you prefer Mr. Pickwick to me, father?"

"Mr. Pickwick is my guest, Virginia. Thank God, I have you always with me!"

The apology sent a flash of loving intelligence between them, and Virginia was not sorry to be dismissed early. Even at twenty-two there are hours when the head aches and

the heart longs for solitude. The whole day had been given to the hopes of others. She now shut herself in her room, and dropped with a happy abandon upon a couch, whose soft and ample width said to her: "Come here and rest." In a few minutes her tired body was asleep, and her diviner part, glad to escape fleshly orders, was away to the "Arethusa."

At that moment Marius Bradford was sitting in the cabin of his ship, and a glove which Virginia had lost lay across his palm. His eyes regarded it with tender respect; his lips moved; he bent his head and kissed it. Hope filled his heart. He lifted up his handsome face and let his eyes rest with an unwinking gaze upon the seat she had always occupied while on the "Arethusa." He was sure he saw her there; he was sure she called his name. He stood listening with all his soul, and the boatswain struck the ship's bell and called cheerily into the midnight:

"All's well!"

And, as if the sound awakened her, Virginia moved and opened her eyes. There had been a little shock, a trembling of the fleshly tunicle, a vague solemnity which she did not understand. She rose and looked into the moonlit room.

"I have been dreaming," she whispered. "Marius, I have been dreaming of you—dream-

ing that I loved you!" She stood quite still a few moments, and the white light touched her with a soft, mystical radiance. "Marius! Marius!"

And there was no need of further speech with herself. At that moment she knew that she loved him.

CHAPTER III.

NELLY HAWORTH.

"One master passion in the breast,
Like Aaron's serpent swallows up the rest."

"Beautiful as sweet,
And young as beautiful, and soft as young,
And gay as soft, and innocent as gay."

IN the cabin of the "Arethusa" Captain Bradford sat with a thoughtful but not despondent face. He had eaten his breakfast, the steward was removing the service, and above his head there was the necessary tumult of putting in the cargo. Through the open ports a fresh breeze was blowing, and he turned his hot face to it, feeling the breath of the sea in its cool saltness like an invitation to come to its deep, cradling billows.

He was thinking of Virginia. He had been vowing to himself to win her, as a brave, honest man should win a woman's love, without fear and without deception. The very memory of her beauty cast a light upon his face, the echoes of her voice were sweetly distinct through all the clamor of the deck noises and the dumb tumult of his own heart.

Suddenly he heard the tones of a woman's

voice. It broke the happy, spellbound mood in which he had been dreaming. "That is Nelly Haworth," he muttered; "and I shall have to give her a disappointment." A shadow passed over his face, and he turned in his chair and looked toward the door of the *salon*. A very handsome girl was standing there. She had a look of anxious inquiry, and she carried a small parcel in her hand.

"It's Nelly Haworth, Captain; if ta likes to see her."

"Come in, Nelly. How do you do? Sit down."

"I'm middling comfortable, Captain. Hes ta any good news for me?"

"I have not, Nelly. No man called John Thomas Clitheroe is on board the 'Water Witch.' I saw her mate, and I asked him the question."

"It's a varry queer thing, Captain. John Thomas told me the 'Water Witch.' Mebbe, now, there may be another ship called the 'Water Witch.'"

"I should not wonder, Nelly. I never thought of that. When I go back to Liverpool, I will find out how many 'Water Witches' there are. You say John Thomas is a ship-carpenter?"

"To be sure; a first-rate hand. And when ta sees a man, Captain, as is a good carpenter, ta sees one that is able to do lots of other things

better than most men can. Carpentering is a trade as taxes a man's brains, Captain."

"No doubt, Nelly. I will take your letter back with me, and if John Thomas Clitheroe is on any 'Water Witch,' I will leave it with her owners to be forwarded to him. Where are you living now?"

"A goodish way from here—with an old man and his daughter. They're varry kind to me."

"Well, Nelly, I shall try once more to find your lover. And I am glad you are doing so well."

His voice and attitude evidently dismissed the girl, and she was quick to feel it. Both her face and voice expressed a little anger and a little reproach. "I'm not going to bother thee, Captain, any longer," she said.

"I do not feel you to be a bother, Nelly. Have I not always been kind to you?"

"Thou hes that, Captain. I wer a desolate lass, cold and sick and hungry, when thou found me out on thy ship. Thou came across my road as if God sent thee."

"That is two years ago, Nelly. Now you have a home and friends, and are doing well. If I find any trace of John Thomas, I will send a man to tell you, because, Nelly—I think you ought not to come to the 'Arethusa.'"

"If ta doesn't want me to come, thou is right to say so. I hev been knitting thee

some gloves and hose for winter. There they are, and a good-day to thee." She rose proudly with the words, and pushed her little present out of her reach.

"Nelly, stop. You do not understand me."

"Well enough, Captain. There's some things women know by nature. Thou is too soft to tell me thy mind, but ta thinks I hev been a bit free. I wouldn't wonder if I hev, to thy notion. New countries, new manners; but I meant nothing that a good lass might not mean."

"I am sure of that, Nelly. And if I find John Thomas I will give him a berth on the 'Arethusa.' Now good-morning."

"Will ta keep the bits of things I knit for thee?"

"Glad to keep them, Nelly, and I will wear them also. I am very much obliged to you, Nelly." He rose with the words, and Nelly, dropping a courtesy, went slowly up the companion-way. There was an expression of wounded feeling and disappointment in her face, which pained and annoyed the Captain. He had been kind to the girl when she was in great distress, and her gratitude, at first very pleasant, had finally become a trifle embarrassing. He forgot that while he had many interests, poor Nelly was alone and friendless in a strange country.

She had also lost track of her lover, and

Captain Bradford had offered to try and find him, so that whatever of sentiment or romance there was in Nelly's heart went out voluntarily to one who had been her friend when she had no other friend. Her Yorkshire nature and training had also led her innocently into a questionable position. She had never been taught to think evil, or to suspect evil, where no actual evil was apparent. But she had the quick instinct of modesty, and she instantly divined why Captain Bradford did not wish her to come to the "Arethusa." His motive was kind and right, and she acknowledged it; but still kind and right motives may, and do very often, give a great deal of pain.

As she disappeared, Captain Bradford went to the deck as if in a sudden hurry. He had also an air of annoyance, and he put his hand among his close brown curls and rumpled them impatiently. Hitherto the visits of Nelly Haworth had not worried him in any respect. But he had met Virginia Mason, and many things, once indifferent, had assumed importance. She had looked into his heart and purified it; and his love for her had exalted his ideal of womanhood, and of the respect which was its due.

After Nelly went, the day was long and hard. He had no cause to reproach himself about the girl, and yet her indignant, sorrowful face haunted him wherever he turned. It

was not long before he resented this obstinate intrusion, and this resentment was felt from the stern to the bow of the "Arethusa." The men who had begun the day singing and joking were not able to continue it in the presence of his silent attention to the business going on; and the sailors obeyed his decisive orders with a prompt, attent obedience, which, had Virginia been present, would have instantly recalled to her the comparison between the Captain and the Roman centurion which John Paul Keteltas had pleased himself with making.

"If the sun would only set!" he muttered, "I would go and see Jack. He says seven o'clock, I think"; and he took a slip of paper from his pocket and re-read it:

Dear Marius: Come at seven. I am longing to see you. I have been to Philadelphia for the firm, and have just heard of your arrival. Same place. JOHN RHEA.

The same place was a respectable house in Rose Street, where the writer of the letter lived. John Rhea and Marius Bradford had had the same mother, and a long tie of dependence and protection had made them more than brothers. John was ten years younger than Marius, and he owed to his elder brother his education and the fine prospects with which he was beginning life. And he loved him truly; not only with that affection which a younger boy gives to his big brother, but also with that admiring respect which is

more like that given to a father. To John Rhea, his brother Marius was the visible presentment of all that was lovable and heroic; to Marius Bradford, his brother John was the best-hearted, the cleverest, and the handsomest young fellow in the world.

They met with an almost womanly embrace. John kissed his brother's brown cheeks, and held both his hands in his own like two children playing. "Marius! Marius! You are the blessedest sight I have seen since you sailed into last July's fog, and looked as big and vapory as an Arabian genie. Let us have a pipe, Marius. I have learned to smoke since you were here."

"You might have learned something better—and perhaps something worse. Say, Jack, how like mother you do grow!"

They were filling their pipes to the words, and they looked at each other for answer. Then they pulled them into good condition, and hitched their chairs closer.

"You seem to enjoy smoking, youngster!"

"Who doesn't? It helps me every way. My brain grows clear and my heart calm. I wrote a song to my pipe last night, Marius—not a bad one, either."

"Poetry and law—that won't do, Jack. Let's hear the jingle, though. There never was a poet in our house, nor among our kin that I know of."

Then Jack made a merry recitative to his pipe, and Marius, with a pleased face, listened to his homely laud:

MY LITTLE BROWN PIPE.

I have a little comforter
  I carry in my pocket.
It is not any woman's face
  Set in a golden locket;
It is not any kind of purse;
  It is not book or letter;
But yet at times I really think
  That it is something better.

Oh, my pipe, my little brown pipe!
  How oft at morning early,
When vexed with thoughts of coming toil,
  And just a little surly,
I sit with thee till things get clear
  And all my plans grow steady,
And I can face the strife of life
  With all my senses ready!

No matter if my temper stands
  At stormy, fair, or clearing,
My pipe has not for any mood
  A word of angry sneering.
I always find it just the same
  In care or joy or sorrow,
And what it is to-day I know
  It's sure to be to-morrow.

It helps me through the stress of life,
  It balances my losses,
It adds a charm to all my joys,
  And lightens all my crosses.
For through its wreathing, misty veil
  Joy has a softer splendor,
And life grows sweetly possible,
  And love more truly tender.

Oh, I have many richer joys!
I do not underrate them,
And every man knows what I mean—
I do not need to state them.
But this I say—I'd rather miss
A deal of what's called pleasure,
Than lose my little comforter,
My little smoky treasure.

"You have not put it badly, Jack, and what you say is true enough—from your point of view. How like mother you do grow! When did you hear from home, Jack?"

"Last week. Everything goes on the same there. Father is no better. He will never go to sea again."

"Poor fellow! Never go to sea again! It is as though the Almighty said to him, 'Imprisonment for life, Abel Rhea.' You sent him the money, and the tobacco, and the bottles?"

"The day you left. Abigail Wood takes care of him and the cottage. But if ever I have a house of my own, the dear old man shall have a share in it."

"That is right, Jack; only, you might marry a girl who is a bit above him, and she wouldn't like it."

"Then she would be a bit above me, and so the question would not come to issue."

"It is a blessed thing to be young, Jack, and to have such enthusiasms; as you grow older——"

"I hope they will grow stronger."

"You have never been in love, Jack?"

"Never, that I know of."

Marius laughed—a somber kind of laugh—and answered, "If you had ever felt love you would know it."

"It isn't likely that you are—that way?"

"Well, it is. A young lady came over with me this voyage, and I tell you, Jack, if I cannot get her for my wife, I do not care much how soon I go to the bottom."

"Father and I being of no account at all. I dare say she isn't worthy of you. First-rate men generally fall in love with a poor kind of a woman."

"You must not speak of her in that fashion, Jack. I do not like it. She has not a fault, that I can see."

"Pretty?"

"Pretty as a rose—the fairest rose that ever grew is nowhere near her. She is altogether sweet and good. Have you passed your examination yet?"

"Yes, and a very good one, too. C. and C. wish me to remain with them. They offer me seven hundred dollars for the first year."

"Take it. You can live very well on seven hundred dollars a year. Stay with a good firm, and you will be counted one of them. And if you fall short in money matters we have one purse, have we not, Jack?"

"No one ever had a better brother than I have, Marius."

"No two boys ever had a better mother. She tied the knot between us. As for your father, Jack, he is like my own—a dear old man! Next summer we will go and see him."

"Our duty and pleasure both, Marius. His rheumatism is very bad; but Abigail says he is quite happy because he has still the use of his hands. He sits by the fire or in the sunshine singing and making nets. Marius! Marius! I thank you for this large life. But for you I should have been away with the whaleships."

Now, gratitude is the sweetest of heart flowers; so sweet that its perfume nearly always draws forth a rain of happy tears. Jack's words, solemn and tender, lifted both into a higher atmosphere. They talked of their dead mother, her heroic struggles and hard life; of their father, and his pluck, and constant labor, and empty old age. And the fret of the day fell off from the weary-hearted Captain, in the realization that there is something grander in life than life can give or death can take away.

They spoke little after this, until their pipes were out; then the room, small and warm and full of smoke, oppressed the man used to chestfuls of rustling salt air, and he went to the window and flung it open. His brother

followed, and made him observe a brick house opposite.

"That is where the Tappan brothers live, and that is Arthur Tappan at the door looking at his roses."

"Tappan?"

"The abolitionist. For that kindly-looking gentleman the State of Georgia or of South Carolina would give ten thousand dollars. Either State would hang him with the greatest pleasure."

"If I were a slave owner I might feel that way also. No man and no State likes to have their domestic arrangements meddled with by outsiders. If Tappan feels so badly about the negroes, there are any number up North starving and ignorant and going to the dev——"

"But free, Marius—free! England has just set us an example by emancipating her slaves in the West Indies."

"England be—— I beg your pardon, Jack; I leave England to the Almighty. But if England is going to preach to us, and wash her hands in our face, I for one will not listen to her. I guess we can manage our own affairs. Who are these Tappans?"

"Wealthy silk merchants. The trouble has been brewing a long time. You remember the rising of slaves under Nat Turner in Virginia about three years ago?"

"I remember the negroes killed more than

sixty white women and little children. When I heard that news, Jack, I was not much of an abolitionist."

"The negroes must have had an excuse for the deed."

"Don't talk to me that way, Jack, or you and I will quarrel. Nothing but brutes kill women and children."

"The 'Richmond Whig' said that another uprising would deliver all blacks to the sword. I suppose that meant black women and children."

"You have no precedent to suppose anything of the kind. The blacks were in no danger. Men love their property too well to destroy it. Every planter would have found an excuse for his own slaves."

"The negro preachers make a deal of trouble; they sow the seed the white abolitionist gives them. Brodnax, in the Virginia Legislature, cried out 'that life was a burden to the Southern planter; that he was forced to lock his doors at night, and open them in the morning with a loaded pistol in his hand.'"

"I am sorry for the Southern planter, but I guess there is enough law in the land to remove any evil. No need to take either the sword or the pistol."

"Marius, do you think slavery right—or wrong?"

"I do not say the principle is right."

"Then if it is wrong, it cannot exist a moment without sin. It ought to be abandoned without regard to consequences. It is not a political problem, it is a personal crime."

"If you want to know anything, address yourself to a young man—they can decide all questions!" Marius spoke with some warmth, but the face of his brother, glowing with enthusiasm, silenced him. He reflected instantly that during our youth there is something in us better than ourselves. It was easy to kill a noble impulse, but in so doing he partially killed the man. He was silent a moment, and then said confidently:

"Jack, if abolition is right, it is of God, and nothing on earth will stop it. You and I can leave it in his hands. We have a foreign element here, who are ready for anything that promises a chance for plunder or riot."

"I should say so. In Boston and Philadelphia there has been hard work to keep it down, and a small thing sways a city anyway. At present the worst elements of New York are fully occupied with boat racing. The river steamers are running each other down for fifty cents—that is the fare to Albany, and the race lasts all the way. You may judge what kind of passengers they carry. Those who want to stop at any intermediate place are in real danger; the boats barely slow up, and they

and their baggage are flung out, with one chance of reaching land and nine chances of staying in the water."

"Why do New Yorkers tolerate such imposition of private interests on public welfare?"

"New Yorkers dearly love a race—horse race, boat race, money race, any kind of race. You should see them on the Union track, especially if it is a Southern mare against a Northern one! I have read of the English Derby, and I suppose we get our hippic and nautical inspiration that way."

They talked thus upon a variety of public and private subjects, the one constantly drifting into the other, until about nine o'clock. Then Marius had a sudden longing for motion, and he bid his brother good-night. The streets were flooded with moonlight, and very quiet in that part of the town. He thought a moment of his anchored ship, and she seemed like a prison to him; so he turned toward Broadway and began to walk northward.

The beautiful dwelling-houses on each side of the splendid thoroughfare were still open, and in many of them there were signs of festivity. The blaze of candles threw a glow upon the pavement, and the moonlight sifted through the shade trees, and mingled with it. Through open windows the murmur of conversation and the echoes of music and song floated. Broadway was the favorite promenade, and it was by

no means deserted. Many couples were strolling in its pleasant lights and shadows, and now and then a sailor, with his blue shirt open at the throat, and his lass upon his arm, went down the broad way singing "Alice Grey."

It was the song of the time. He had heard his men drawling it on the mizzen-top and top-gallant, at the wheel and in the forecastle; but hitherto he had taken little note of it. It was different now. He had fallen himself into a condition which enabled him to divine that sense of actual suffering in the commonplace words which gave them in so many hearts a pathetic echo. About Canal Street he stopped to listen to a sailor lad rolling his way riverward to the complaining melody—

> She's all my fancy painted her,
> She's lovely, she's divine;
> But her heart it is another's,
> It never can be mine.
> Yet loved I, as man never loved,
> A love without decay;
> Oh, my heart! my heart is breaking,
> For the love of Alice Grey.

As he listened and let the mournful syllables find their way into his own heart, he heard the shouting and trampling of a noisy crowd. The singer forgot his breaking heart and ran riverward to meet it; the Captain was also instantly alert for the possible danger. If the crowd should turn northward? He

could think of only one house among the many which might be in peril. For aught he knew, Major Mason might be obnoxious to the mob on the abolition question; or if not on that, on the English question, or the tariff, or the Bank Charter. Tempers, in the heat of the various discussions then pending, had been burnt to tinder; a spark of any kind would fire them.

He did not wait to see in which direction the mob would move, but hasted up-town at a rapid walk. At Spring Street he stopped to listen. The crowd had evidently gone down Broadway; a few scatterers from it were noisily following him; but they seemed good-natured in their bluster and their hoarse laughter, and he finally stayed a man, and asked what the Canal Street crowd were after?

"Good luck to ye, dear! We were after having an illegant picnic up the river; racing we were, all the way to Albany and back. A lot of poor bodies on the 'Champlain,' and ourselves on the 'Nimrod,' to their defiance. And the 'Champlain' pushing hard, but we leaving her genteelly behint, and coming first into dock. Glory be to the saints! A great race intirely."

"Was the 'Champlain' far behind the 'Nimrod'?"

"The length of the ship itself—and the

heart-scalded creatures crying for a fight on it; and ourselves shouting on the victory, and the perlice nowhere, and not wanting to be anywhere. Wur-rah! it's myself that's tired with the glory and honor"—and he went onward with his crushed hat on the top of his walking stick, affronting the quiet night with a half drunken crooning of a Whiteboy song.

Then Captain Bradford pursued his walk as far as the Mason house. It was nearly ten o'clock, and he had no other hope than that of seeing the place. A man looks kindly at the bank where he has a good deposit. A mother looks fondly up to the window of her nursery. A lover finds in the outside of the dwelling which shelters his mistress an irresistible and inexplicable charm.

There were lights burning, but the shades were drawn, and the house was very still. He resolved to indulge himself. He would walk the block opposite it just twenty times, neither more nor less—ten times up, ten times down—and then go back to the "Arethusa." At the third trip a carriage drove rapidly round the corner, the front door opened, and he saw Virginia standing in the lighted hall, with Jane Keteltas by her side. She kissed Jane fondly, and walking to the door with her, watched the carriage out of sight.

Now, if Marius had been strict with himself, he ought to have been at the other extremity

of the block; but he began to loiter when he saw the carriage, and he stood still when he saw the door open. Then he made a new bargain with himself: he would gaze at Virginia until the last moment, and withdraw his claim to the other seventeen trips. Even while he was making it, Virginia moved slightly. She was turning into the house, but something arrested her. It was the ardent gaze of her lover; for no magnet is so powerful as the human eye when it is full of purpose or feeling.

Swiftly as a thought her eyes answered the entreaty. She gazed forward, her vision caught the vision that summoned it, and in the bright moonlight, a figure so tall and so conspicuous in its uniform could not be mistaken. Marius lifted his cap, and on his outstretched and upraised arm the moonlight caught the glittering band. It flashed a double recognition, and Virginia did not hesitate a moment to answer it. She sent a smile across the empty street, and he caught the glory and warmth of it in his heart.

A moment she stood with a charming and conscious irresoluteness, and he divined that she would not close the door while he lingered. He lifted his cap again. She bent slightly forward, and as he passed onward he heard the door close, not as a careless heart would close it, but slowly, with a soft reluctance.

Oh, how glad and happy he was! He walked as if on air. He was conscious of no effort, sensible of no fatigue. He only knew that his steps kept time to some mysterious music, that his lips kept constantly murmuring, "Oh, my love! my love! my love!"

CHAPTER IV.

JANE'S LOVER.

"The pleasure of pleasing is legitimate, and the desire to rule offensive."

"Politeness is the flower of humanity. He who is not polite enough is not human enough."

> "When Love begins to slacken and decay,
> It uses an enforced ceremony;
> There are no tricks in plain and simple faith."

THE little tableau which Captain Marius had witnessed was not an unusual one. When Jane stayed late with her friend, there was an understanding that Virginia should send her home. John Paul did not permit his horses to leave their stable after the sun had fallen, except on extraordinary occasions. "They have done their day's work, and they ought to have their night's rest," he always said; "and if Jane is out amusing herself, when she ought to be in her bed, the horses are not to suffer. No, no; one must be just even to the dumb beasts."

On this day there had been so much to talk about that ten o'clock had found Jane and Virginia with still undiminished enthusiasm. The morning had been devoted by Virginia

to the pleasant work of unpacking, and her special treasures lay in rich confusion on the bed, sofa, and chairs of her own room. Jane's advent about noon was a real delight. The two charming women went laughing up-stairs together, and stood with admiring exclamations among the beautiful garments and adornments Virginia had brought home.

For some time nothing else was thought of; but in a pause of their delightful examination, Virginia asked, with a sudden curiosity, "Did Mr. Forfar call on you last night?"

"He never came near us. I kept on my green silk, and was as cross and uncomfortable as possible. At tea-time father gave me one sidelong look, and I felt like a fool, Virginia, and not at all grateful to Mr. Forfar for the experience. But he came this morning."

"He came this morning? And were you as pretty as possible?"

"I did not want another look from father, so I wore one of my usual morning gowns, the prettiest I have, and I had a velvet band around my brow and throat. My hair was well dressed, and I have, as you may see, a very good complexion to-day. He came about ten. I was sitting at my worsted work, and when he walked up the garden path I saw him partially through the syringa bushes. Of course I expected he would be brought to the parlor at once; but he must have asked for

father, for he was taken to his business room, and there he remained for two hours."

"Two hours, Jane?"

"Two full hours. Dinner was nearly ready when father brought him to the parlor. I was on pins and needles by that time, and too cross to lift my eyes, until father and Mr. Forfar stood at the frame-point. 'Jane,' said father, 'here is Mr. Nigel Forfar. His father was my friend, Jane, and I hope you and Nigel will put another knot in the old tie.' What could I do after that but rise and say something cordial? and I flashed him a look from my eyes, as I lifted them, which is generally successful."

"I have seen that flash, Jane. Could this Southern gentleman resist it?"

"He caught it in his own eyes, and flashed it back on me. And such eyes, Virginia, I never met—so black, and so glowing! 'I've got my deathe with them,' as the old song says."

She laughed, but there was something troubled or serious below the affected mirth. "He is very handsome, Virginia. You must have thought so."

"He is tall and stately looking, and his face, though swarthy, is finely formed. But his manners are repellent, and every one on the 'Arethusa' thought his temper execrable."

"He disliked the captain."

"Disliked the captain? How could any one do that?"

"He said he was offensively authoritative for the master of a mere packet ship."

"He had to be authoritative with Mr. Forfar. The gentleman could not forget that he was a slave owner. He wished the ship run to suit his ways and likings, and treated Captain Bradford as if he was his property."

"Southern gentlemen are usually very haughty. They have the habit of command from their babyhood."

Then they should keep their habit at home among their slaves. The captain of a mail packet when once at sea allows no one to command him; and my father, and others on board, regarded his pretensions as ridiculous, and treated them with contempt."

"You need not get so angry about it, Virginia; and, really, I think Mr. Forfar must have had a very unpleasant voyage."

"Very likely. I am quite sure his negro valet did."

"And he says he does not think Captain Bradford a good sailor."

"Captain Bradford is the best sailor that crosses the Atlantic. Your father knows that. Every one in Liverpool said so, and father and I thought very highly of his seamanship. The second night we were out, when off the coast of Ireland, there was a storm. The captain

saw it coming, and he could have crept into a small bay near us; most sailors would have done so; but he set all sail and went out to sea to meet the storm. That is Captain Bradford. Mr. Forfar was in his cabin ill with seasickness—or fright."

"Oh, not fright, Virginia! I am sure Mr. Forfar is no coward."

"I do hope you are not going to fall in love with this man, Jane. I am certain he will make any woman miserable. He has an ill-conditioned temper, exercising itself without reason, and scolding on its own account."

"I am not afraid of him, Virginia, and you see I am twenty-two years old."

Then Virginia changed the subject. She felt very kindly to Jane, and kindness is wisdom. And she also knew that she was disposed to be unjust to Mr. Forfar. For, though absent, he ruled her by the force of antipathy, just as others possessed her by the force of attraction.

The subject was not hard to change amid the silks and laces, the fans and gloves, the scarfs and scents, and jewelry of all kinds, by which they were surrounded. Near ten o'clock they began to realize that they had done nothing but admire and try effects, and tell and listen to incidents connected with each separate purchase. Then the carriage was ordered, and the pretty tableau enacted which sent

Marius Bradford back to the "Arethusa" in a kind of mortal seventh heaven.

Virginia was also profoundly moved by the event. That tall figure on the quiet moonlit street, that momentary vision of the uncovered head and gleaming cap, made her tremble with a soft delight. She said a hurried good-night to her father, who was reading with quiet smiles his installment of "Pickwick," and then hastened to the solitude her heart craved. With a careless movement she threw aside some spangled gauzes, occupying the chair which would give her the best view of the spot upon which her lover had stood. Her warm blushes tinged her cheeks with loveliest color; her eyes shone; she was conscious of a strange, sweet tenderness, new and never felt before. Their transitory recognition, though it had occupied but thirty seconds, kept her waking for hours. Amid the treasures of European markets she sat indifferent, feeling that the little strip of rose silk Marius was to match for her was of far more importance. As the moon began to sink she went softly to bed in its fading light, chill and weary with that reaction which as surely follows emotion as night follows day.

In the morning her first sense was one of annoyance. The untidy room offended all her instincts and habits. She reproached herself for the babbling, useless day she had spent

In its effects it had spoiled the pleasure she derived from the unexpected sight of Marius. How much sweeter to have dreamed herself to sleep in a room spotless and orderly! She rose with determination in all her movements, and began to put away and sort and side as soon as it was daylight. Her moral nature was too fine to endure disorder; her spiritual life too real not to be sensibly depressed by its presence.

She worked steadily all day, and by the dinner hour she had accomplished her aim; the room had regained its normal atmosphere of purity and repose. Jane had not called, there had been no delays, and she felt happy in the sense of work accomplished. For a week afterward there was bad weather, and she saw nothing of her friend—for girls did not then have the penny post and messenger boys to carry a thousand frivolous notes. They bore the little uncertainties of their lives with equanimity, trusting that all would turn out well, and generally finding that it did so.

At length, one fine afternoon, she drove over to the Keteltas house. Jane met her with a slight embarrassment, and Virginia understood the reason when she found Nigel Forfar there. He had not approved of Virginia on the ship, and he made her distinctly feel that he did not approve of her as the friend of the young lady whom he intended to

marry. It was in vain Virginia ignored her previous experiences with the gentleman; in vain she told herself that a sea voyage generally brought to the surface the unhumanized traits in a man. Forfar seemed determined to wantonly and willingly offend.

Assuming the Southern predilections of the Keteltas household, he affected to feel it quite in order to ridicule everything not Southern. He complained that the City Hotel, at which he was stopping, was conducted on the most vulgar principles. "I am rung out of bed, and rung in to every meal, as if I were a servant; and it is mine host's time, or else no other time," he said indignantly. "As for dinner, the most essential meal throughout the twenty-four hours, it is eat in a hurry that is perfectly disgraceful."

"There are so many essential things in a New Yorker's twenty-four hours," said Virginia.

He did not notice the apology, but walking to the hearthrug as if it were an impregnable vantage ground, continued:

"No gentleman eats amid rush and clamor. And there is no conversation at table. If you converse, you must lose your meal. In the South our meals are taken in dignified repose; nothing is hurried; even the soup has its proper recognition."

"New York has no time for dignified din-

ners, Mr. Forfar. Every one has something to make, or something to learn, or something to do; people generally are apt to regard dinner as a necessary but unfortunate waste of time."

"That is no excuse, Miss Mason. People who do not pay attention to their meals will transact all other affairs carelessly. They should take a lesson from England on this subject."

"New York is completely *à la française.* Paris is teaching us our paces."

"Then you will be led to revolution."

"We have been there."

"And to ruin."

"That is for our enemies."

"Pardon! I am committing an indiscretion, in talking of what ladies cannot understand."

"Oh!" exclaimed Virginia, and then, seeing the admiring and deprecating look on Jane's face, she abandoned the controversy. But every subject introduced tended toward the same irritable point. Virginia lightly skimmed the surfaces of events; Forfar would neither see nor accept the social persiflage. If they spoke of places both had visited in Europe, Virginia's impressions were at once assailed with realities. For the man had that sort of learned stupidity which quotes books and rests itself on figures and facts.

And after all, is there anything more power-

ful than stupidity? Wisdom is the little band of pioneers, stupidity is the innumerable army. Virginia could see that as Mr. Forfar quoted Lord Melbourne and Mr. Peel, and fortified himself with alps upon alps of statistics, Jane was lost in admiration for a young man at once so handsome and so undeniably clever. She was not inclined to prolong such a visit. The pain of disputing always exceeds its pleasure; it makes the mind deaf, and then it is best to be also dumb.

Jane did not urge her to remain, though she went to the door with her, and demonstratively pulled some late flowers and put them into Virginia's girdle with a kiss. But she did not speak of Nigel Forfar, and Virginia understood from her manner, not only that she had determined to marry him, but also that she had determined not to permit any unfavorable discussion affecting her intention.

In this apparently ordinary and affectionate parting, Virginia suffered a pang she had never before felt—the sense of a heart-snub, of desertion, of jealousy. Until she reached her home she restrained the hot currents which made her heart burn with anger and her eyes fill with passionate tears. But the first moments of her solitude were given up to uncontrollable weeping. Jane, if she had not already done so, was quite ready to give up her friend for her lover. and Virginia thought bitterly

of this man, whom she had disliked on instinct, taking her place in Jane's heart, and rifling it gradually of all their sweet confidences and little womanly secrets.

But there is always some comfort in every trouble, if we will only look for it; and in the very tide of her sense of wrong, she remembered with a glow of satisfaction that she had not uttered a word which could lead Jane to suspect the love between Captain Bradford and herself.

"What a wonder! and what a piece of good fortune!" she said softly. "I never kept anything from Jane before. I told her all about young Van Buren and Marcus White; but of you, Marius!" and she looked with large, tender eyes far away beyond mortal vision, "of you, Marius, I never spoke at all!"

Yet even with this source of comfort she was greatly troubled, and her red eyes and look of annoyance did not escape her father's notice. But Major Mason was not a consolatory busybody. He knew from personal experience how much solace there is in those homely, orderly duties which include the pleasure of others as well as our own. He saw that her dinner in his company, and her care for his satisfaction, brought back her cheerfulness, and he quite expected the confidence which came as they quietly sat together in their after-dinner session.

"Father, put down your book; I want to talk to you a little."

"Would you like to go to the Park Theater, Virginia? I am at your service."

"No. I have been to a little play this afternoon."

"A tragedy?"

"It may turn out to be one. You know how dearly I love Jane Keteltas. Once she loved me, but now——"

"Has she got a lover?"

"Yes, Mr. Forfar."

"Then be content to resign her. A great many women would prefer Mr. Forfar to a lifelong friend."

"How can any woman like him? He is so domineering and so ill-tempered."

"They would look at his inches, at his aristocratic manner, and his really handsome face, and ignore his ill temper. As for his commanding way, women yearn naturally for a master, and when they find one they are happy to sing 'hosanna' to him."

"Jane sang it in an adoring silence, nodding her pretty head as chorus to all his assertions. I came away before the play was over."

"Very proper. It is one of the most important elements of good manners to know when you personally are in the way."

"Father, be so kind as to close your book a few minutes. I want you to comfort me

about Jane. I think if she makes Forfar her husband, she will make him her lord and master; and he will be an unjust lord and a cruel master."

"I am by no means sure, Virginia, that Forfar will find a willing slave in your friend Jane. I have a great respect for little, sandy-haired women. It is the long, swan-necked women who are easily cowed, and who fall into fainting fits. A woman like Jane is usually all sheer pluck."

"Do you put me among the swan-necked, fainting tribe, father? If you do, I consider your theory without bottom. I should snap my fingers at Mr. Forfar's commands. I should contradict his authoritative assertions. I should laugh at his pretensions."

"You are not in love with him. You do not even admire him."

"Neither do you 'even admire him,' father. Forfar is one of those people of whom we say instinctively and emphatically, 'They are hateful and we hate them.'"

"Virginia!"

"Excuse me, father. You may put the sentiment in more Christian language, but the sentiment is the same. There is a repulsive atmosphere around Nigel Forfar that would chill anything short of a mother's affection. I wonder Jane is not sensitive to it."

"There may be a human chemistry to

account for it. Something is running in my head from old school days, when I was taught that two alien substances could be united by a third that was sympathetic to both. Jane and Nigel may be alien in their previous separate conditions, but made one by the influence of John Paul Keteltas, who is probably sympathetic both with the young man and his daughter."

"Chemistry may convince, but it does not comfort. There is, however, some satisfaction in Jane's small stature and sandy hair. You are sure that they can be relied on, father?"

Major Mason laughed and closed his book, with the air of a man who is conquered.

"I really do not know what to say, Virginia; I see in your case an evidence of persistence in tall, slender women which might be fatal to my hypothesis. Still, if you will consider it, names are facts, and somehow imply the kind of personality they stand for. What idea does Delilah give you?"

"I should think she was a tall, large woman, with black velvety eyes and black hair. I dare say she wore Tyrian purple, and many gold ornaments about her throat and arms."

"I think you are right. If Delilah had been a little woman, she would never have condescended to deceive Samson. She would have taken him unshorn. Jael must have been a large woman, or she would not have murdered

her enemy sleeping. Judith's tactics would never have suggested themselves to a little woman, full of fire and force and passionate recklessness. But I will tell you who was a small, light-haired, probably freckled woman: the Queen Jezebel—the intrepid, courageous partisan, who dared single-handed, and with a great deal of success, the whole power of a cruel and tyrannical priesthood. It is not very orthodox, but I am not able to resist a sly admiration for that clever little Phœnician princess. Now, what do you think of *Jane?*"

"I think—*Jane* will—perhaps—hold her own rights. But, father, in history and poetry, large women seem to be the favorites. There was Juno——"

"An ox-eyed, towering giantess. Any little American girl would give her favors, and then sail all round her."

"The Norse women, father? They were large and stately, and they did whatever seemed good in their own eyes."

"They are the exception that proves the rule. They not only slashed their way through history, but sat as queens over their households."

"Perhaps I have a drop of the Norse elixir in my blood."

"Very likely. The Masons come from a part of Yorkshire in which the Norse settled.

But who has the formula of the elements which are mingled potently in a fine nature? Have I satisfied you that if there should be any struggle between Jane Keteltas and Nigel Forfar, Jane will be very apt to give him a deal of trouble?"

"But Love may tie both her will and her hands. You know that you may kill a bird on her nest, and she will not fly. Love has clipped her wings."

"Nay, then, if you bring in Love, I have nothing to say. Love sets all reason at naught. I may as well go on with my book; an argument where Love intrudes is nothing but exceptions; and the impossible is precisely the thing most likely to happen."

The comfort these reflections gave Virginia was not great, but it was as much as people ever receive from the discussion of probable events. Mr. Mason left the unprofitable employment with a little polite mental loitering, but he was glad to reopen his new volume of Lockhart's "Life of Scott," and put Jane Keteltas out of his consideration. Virginia went to her room earlier than usual. She had a sense of deprivation and loneliness. But a little reflection convinced her that Jane's absorbing interest in Nigel Forfar was only temporary. When the novelty of his attentions was over, she would regain her

influence over her. This hope somewhat comforted her, for to be happy in life we must be able bravely to blind ourselves.

Besides, when it came to thinking steadily of her friend, she found it impossible. No matter how often she brought back her mind to this starting-point, in a few moments she found herself following the "Arethusa." Jane was a thousand leagues behind, and her heart was full of the lonely man standing by the wheel or the mainmast, or slowly pacing the deck.

She remembered one night when they were just out of Liverpool, walking the deck with her father and meeting him there. His face was lifted to the rigging, where the boatswain and two sailors were busy, and he stood aside a little to let them pass more easily. In the passing, her father said, "A fine night, Captain"; and the Captain lifted his cap and answered: "A fine night, and a fine passage, sir, if it so please God!" She recalled every detail of this meeting. She forgot Jane, and Jane's probable fate, and, thinking of her own lover with the fear and tenderness his constant danger inspired, she went to sleep whispering for him his own prayer—"A fine passage, if it so please God!"

CHAPTER V.

A LITTLE LOVE AND A LITTLE MONEY.

"Cupid's fled, no man knows whither;
But another Cupid's come,
With a brow of care and gloom,
Fixed upon the earthly mold,
Thinking of the sullen gold,
In his hand the bow no more,
At his back the household store
That the bridal gold must buy."

"The world is too much with us, late and soon;
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

FOR a few weeks there was no great apparent change in the lives of Virginia Mason and Jane Keteltas, yet from the seed of events sown it was easy to predicate the future. For unavoidably in all our plans we prophesy in part; the action of to-day generates the action of to-morrow; and the thing we intend brings with it a host of things we did not intend; and in this twilight of perception the best and the wisest have to labor.

The fortunes of Jane and Nigel Forfar were, however, perceptibly moving onward to a well-defined end. Jane was deeply in love with the young Southerner, and Nigel appeared to be fascinated by Jane's fair beauty and intellectual

brightness. Evidently the course of this true love was destined to run smoothly, with the exception of such gusts and glooms as arose from the tyrannical temper of Nigel, and Jane's rebellions against it.

In their courtship, Virginia, though she was unaware of it, had become a prominent element. She was the hinge on which their veiled battle for supremacy turned. To spend a day with her friend was Jane's way of declaring her independence of thought and action. Every such occasion gave Nigel a fit of jealousy. He could not endure that the woman he loved should care for the love of any other creature but himself. "Am I not sufficient?" he asked on every such offense; and sometimes Jane said he was, and sometimes she said he was not.

Virginia did not suffer as much in the uncertainty of her friend's visit as she would have done had the change taken place a little earlier. The hours that had been brightened by Jane's visits and chatter were very agreeably given to quiet dreams and memories of Marius Bradford. Her father also claimed a larger portion of her time and sympathy. He was gloomy with a sense of coming events, which, though uncertain, were portentous because of their uncertainty. A feeling of responsibility quite strange to her deadened, like a soft pedal, the joyousness of her natural

temper; and her father's depression stole over her life as silently and unconsciously as a fog steals over the meadows.

The symptoms of this change began immediately after their return from Europe. She remembered the first shadow of it. Fanny Kemble was playing "The Stranger," and her representation of Mrs. Haller had roused a deep enthusiasm in New York. Virginia had a singular reluctance to see her. Either through a dream or a presentiment, or in some occult way of soul-prescience, she had conceived a superstitious feeling against the play. But she was ashamed to express her unreasonable fear, and reluctantly permitted her father to take her to its last representation. Nothing particular seemed to occur, and yet the connecting links between events are as mysterious as those between trains of thought.

In one of the intervals between acts Joseph Cruger, of the law firm of "Cushing & Cruger," said a few words to Major Mason. Virginia did not hear their import, but she saw that her father was much annoyed. Generally she did not scruple to make inquiries, but in this case it was not until the following morning she felt able to ask:

"What did Mr. Cruger say to you last night, father? I am sure it was something disagreeable."

"Something disastrous, Virginia. He told me that stocks in which I am greatly interested have had a heavy fall, and, moreover, that those abolition fanatics are making trouble again, just when we have trouble enough without their nonsense."

At this moment a visitor was announced, who on entering presented a letter to Major Mason. He was a very handsome young man, and had a striking likeness to Captain Bradford. Virginia walked to a window overlooking Broadway, and speculated upon this likeness. Had Captain Bradford a brother? She ransacked her memory for some definite answer to the question, and she had almost persuaded herself that a brother in New York had been named to her, when she heard her father say to the stranger:

"Give this letter to any member of the firm. Good-morning, Mr. Rhea." Then he turned to Virginia and said, "We cannot do the shopping I intended to-day. I am needed down town on business, Virginia."

"Then I will go and see Jane. I am afraid you have bad news, father."

"I do not know how bad yet, so we will not talk of it—at the worst, a few thousands, and we can still live without them."

The words haunted her as she walked slowly up Broadway to Fourteenth Street. She was old enough to understand that the loss of a few

thousands might entail all the misery of large wishes and means that did not go their length. The gray, cold, somber day was in sympathy with her mood. On either hand the gardens had been laid waste by the frost, and the trees above them blown thin by the winds. Northward, the fields rolled away bare and brown and desolate. It was only when she cast her eyes on the pleasant dwellings, with their separate airs of comfort and elegance, that she began to reason away her drifting melancholy thoughts, and assure her heart that since nothing can be accidental with God all must be foreseen and provided for.

It was near noon when she arrived at the Keteltas garden gates. John Paul had a Dutchman's instinct about flowers and shrubs, and his plot was still pleasant with Michaelmas daisies, rosemary, and hardy plants. The fallen leaves had been removed, the dead vines burned, the evergreens carefully attended to. For in every season Keteltas got all the profit and pleasure possible out of his flower plot. In a few years he knew that it would be too valuable to grow roses and dahlias; but until the land came to its maturity of value, he was disposed to grow the finest of roses and dahlias, and to grow them abundantly. He had bought it by the acre; when he could sell it by the square foot, the flowers would vanish from it forever.

He was walking about its firm, clean paths when Virginia entered. His peering glance and stoop forward arrested her steps. "Where is Jane?" she asked, almost mechanically.

"Come, come! you must find out where Nigel Forfar is. Jane will be wherever it suits the young man to be. She lives and moves and has her being in him. Women never do but they overdo; never love but they overlove."

"I think men should hardly complain of that, Mr. Keteltas; if it be, as you say, that Heaven made woman for man."

"Did I say that? Then I was talking like the foolish ones. But if Heaven did so, it was while man was asleep. Had he been awake, my dear, he would have put in a demurrer. Go your ways in-doors; Nigel and Jane are not far off."

She found them in the ordinary parlor. They were sitting on a sofa studying a map of the United States. There are men who can never take a journey without studying it on a map, and Nigel Forfar was one of them. He had the course marked out to Washington, and in his pocket-book the probable stopping-places and expenses. He had been all the morning busy with such calculations, and was not in the least tired. But Jane was exceedingly weary, and Virginia's entrance gave her the longed-for opportunity of desertion.

"We are arranging our bridal journey, Miss Mason," said the prospective husband. He evidently thought that this explanation would be regarded by Virginia as a polite dismissal. But Jane had arrived at the point of rebellion, and she had risen to meet her friend, and was helping her to uncloak with all those sweet formalities native to girls who are confidential with each other. Their faces touched, they whispered and laughed to the whisper, they went to the mirror together, they kissed and embraced, and were excessively affectionate; first, because it really pleased them to be so; second, because both enjoyed the fact that it displeased Nigel Forfar.

After a little while they left him alone with his map and his pocket-book, and went to Jane's room. There three dressmakers were at work, and every place was a litter of silks and bombazines, India muslins and Saxony cloth. Then the great secret came out: "Virginia, I am to be married at Christmas. Nigel wants to go South, and I do believe he is afraid to leave me under your influence. He considers it demoralizing."

"He is very ungrateful. Several times on the 'Arethusa' he would have been publicly reproved by the Captain but for my influence."

"Very impertinent of the Captain, I think."

"Are you actually going to trust yourself with Mr. Forfar? I do not like this sudden

hurry, Jane. When you spoke of your marriage a week ago, it was to be in May."

"Nigel has reasons for returning South, and he does not wish to leave me. He supposes I have no objections, and father thinks well of the change."

"Mr. Forfar has a fathomless complaisance."

"Well, Virginia, we cannot escape either our fate or our fate day. Nigel says he is sure our marriage was ordained in heaven. He believes everything is foreordained."

"That is a poetic fancy, Jane. If Nigel had not come to see you, where would Fate be? Fate was at the mercy of this man's caprice, at the mercy of a score of other circumstances. No lover preordained by Fate for me."

"I do not think you are talking nicely, Virginia. There *is* fate in marriage. Father says so, also. If Fate does not bring you a husband, what then?"

"Love will bring me one. He will see that we meet in some happy, unaware hour. As for a short engagement——"

"It is better than a never ending one."

"And yet it cannot help having a flavor of business and furniture and dress about it."

"Well, it matters little to me; and Nigel says it makes a great deal of difference to him. Nigel has a great many objections to a long engagement."

"I have no doubt. He is methodical, and

dancing attendance on you tumbles his plans upside down. He is selfish, and he is compelled to make continual sacrifices. He is proud and shy, and hates to be exhibited as an engaged man. He is greedy, and looks upon the presents he makes you as so much tribute money. He is practical and business-like, and would prefer to reduce the poetry of marriage to a question and a ceremony. My dear Jane, forgive me! I do not like this hurry. Put Forfar off until the spring. No one knows what may happen before May."

"You are cruel, Virginia. You know I love Nigel, and he does love me. Every one has their own way of loving. You are so unjust to Mr. Forfar. He says you are his enemy. He feels it, Virginia—and so do I."

She was crying a little, and Virginia was immediately angry with herself. What good was there in telling people unpleasant truths? And, after all, Forfar as a lover was entirely out of her judgment, Love being a purely personal poem, and having no obligation to be intelligible or interesting to others.

She took her friend in her arms and kissed her little pretense of tears away. Then, as they turned over new garments and discussed the perennial beauty of fashion, they grew once more loving and confidential. And Virginia having abandoned her position, Jane was enabled to presume a great deal more than she

would otherwise have done. She took her revenge in a continual covert praise of her lover, she associated him with all her hopes and plans of happiness, she quoted him as continually indorsing or dissenting from Virginia's own opinions. It was a rather conscious *fantasia* on dress and Nigel Forfar.

In a couple of hours the feeling was overstrained. Jane was weary of her own triumph, Virginia depressed with the effort to be sympathetic and enthusiastic. They went downstairs and found that Nigel had left on some flimsy pretense; and Jane, in her heart, blamed Virginia for her lover's defection. No effort was made to detain her, and she said "good-by" with a conscious constraint, and passed into the street. It had, to her, a dull, wretched look; the men and women on it wore anxious faces. She did not reflect that she saw everything through herself, and that it was the shadow of her own mood which darkened both nature and humanity.

Her spirits rose when she passed within the portals of her home. Outside there was variableness and many shadows of change and turning; but Home was life's standing pleasure. She hasted to her room; she shook off, she washed off the very dust of the unhappy day; she clothed herself in fresh garments, and went down to meet her father suffused with the elements of serenity and hope.

The Major had also suffered from a day full of contradictious events; she perceived this, though culture and the habit of social restraint prevented any expression of it during the service of dinner. To the faint tinkle of the crystal and china and the leisurely movements of the soft-footed servant, he spoke of the new opera house, of the prima donna, of Mr. Clay and Mr. Everett's visit, and of a large dinner to be given them by Chancellor Kent; and suddenly, as he moved away from the table, of the "Arethusa."

"The 'Sully' arrived this morning, Virginia, and reports the 'Arethusa' in her wake."

Virginia blushed vividly; that beautiful blush which modesty drops between the eyes and the feelings; that effectual, marvelous veil which keeps the senses circumspect and preserves youth from stepping out of its ignorance and interrupting its happiness. Virginia was full of joy and longing at the few casual words uttered with so much indifference; and yet she was startled at the near approach of love; and her instinct was to fly from what she most desired.

Fortunately, the movement from the table and the walk across the hall into the parlor hid all her timidity and embarrassment; and as she took her place on the hearth by her father's side, she answered:

"I am glad the 'Arethusa' will soon be here. Captain Bradford brings me, I hope, some silk I require to finish my dress for Jane's wedding, and, as she is to be married at Christmas, very little time is left to——"

"You amaze me! I thought Mr. Forfar was going South until May."

"He has changed his mind; and Jane has given way to him. She says her father also thinks well of an early marriage. What can a girl do when her lover and father both urge? I am sure she will be disappointed in one respect: she has always declared in favor of a magnificent wedding ceremony, and in so much hurry it is impossible. If her mother had been alive, she would have opposed such imprudent haste."

"I have heard some rumors lately of Mr. Keteltas and the widow Jay. It is three years since Mrs. Keteltas died; he may really be thinking of his own affairs. Have you heard any particulars concerning Jane's marriage?"

"She promised to come here to-morrow and tell me all the arrangements. They were not quite completed to-day. Two months ago I was her chief counselor. She would have nothing I did not approve; and this afternoon she was shy and reticent, and I think not very sorry to see me go away. So much for friendship, father!"

"Women's friendships are but pretty bows of ribbon—a lover easily unties them."

"Oh, indeed, father! I think they are of as good material as men's friendships. You were speaking last week of Mr. Drayton's friend, who led him purposely into a rotton speculation. And there was Mr. Ogden's friend, who used against him all the facts confided to him in trust; and Captain Dawson's friend, who borrowed his money and then stole his daughter. Neither hooks of steel or gold will now grapple a friend to you. And I think men are quite as faithless as women."

"Nevertheless, there is no David and Jonathan among women."

"And it is very little to men's credit that they have to go back so far for an example of masculine loyalty. Have you nothing fresher? I dare say, also, that the ancient article in friendship was just as false as the modern. David himself, who really seems to have had a capacity for friendship, complains of his own familiar friend lifting up his heel against him. And remember Cæsar and Brutus, father."

"Politically, Virginia, men are often obliged to be unfriendly to those they love. I am sure that President Jackson suffers in the course he feels himself compelled to take."

"On the contrary, I think he positively enjoys putting his will against the will and the interests of the whole American people. I

heard Mr. Keteltas railing at him in good set terms to-day."

At this moment Mr. Keteltas entered the room. He came in crisp with the frosty air, rosy as a winter apple, his shrewd smile and peering bright eyes making quite a remarkable impression above his white neckcloth and primrose-colored vest.

"How are you, Major? I heard you were deep in the Delaware and Hudson stock; also in Camden and Amboy. I hope I have heard a false report."

"I am sorry to admit that you have not, Mr. Keteltas."

"Eh, what do you say? For my part, I think the Creator was ill off for a turn of work when he made Andrew Jackson. Why cannot he let Biddle and the Bank alone? Great fish he is after; but great fish break the net, and if he ruins the Bank, he ruins the country also."

"President Jackson is my friend, Mr. Keteltas. He is actuated by the loftiest patriotism. You must think so if you consider the subject."

"I, and men in general, think as our purses think, Major. It is well known that Jackson hates Biddle, and when Jackson hates he is like an Indian on the war-path. He is bent on Biddle's ruin, and quite ready to ruin the country if he cannot accomplish it without."

"Sir, the Bank of the United States has

been too long the keeper of the public money. It has used it to corrupt the political institutions of the country. It wants a new charter. If it retains the public money, it can buy up all Congress; it can buy any privilege it desires, with the public funds."

"The President has his veto."

"What can the veto avail against millions of money? Are our free institutions to fall under the dictation of a moneyed combination?"

"I will take leave to say that a moneyed combination is better than the will of Andrew Jackson and his Napoleonic ideas of his own authority."

"Andrew Jackson has a great deal of plain common sense."

"That is the popular nonsense talk. And common sense is the most pernicious of doctrines on questions of banking and currency."

"Men of your ideas, Mr. Keteltas, want a banker in the Presidency."

"And it is my opinion that a banker would be better than a mere fighter. Jackson's idea of ruling is force of some kind or other."

"Force and right rule all things in this world; force before right arrives. But we forget my daughter, Mr. Keteltas; she does not understand or feel any interest in this conversation. To-morrow I will convince you of your error."

"Yes, yes, I was not thinking of Miss Vir-

ginia, and she must kindly excuse me the oversight. Indeed, I must be away, for I promised a fair friend to go to the theater with her—a foolish thing for me to do."

"We all fall into temptation sometimes, Mr. Ketaltas."

"That is so. Well, Major, I came to give you good advice; do not sell; stocks will rise again. If I can be of use in any way, my name is John Paul Keteltas, and it is at your service."

He was at the door of the room as he said the words, and Major Mason followed him with a frank and conspicuous pleasure.

"Thank you, Mr. Keteltas," he said. "When I have forgotten the strait that brought your offer, I shall still warmly remember the kindness that brought you here to say those words." And John Paul went away blushing at his own generosity, and feeling a most unusual glow as he walked with quickened steps toward the house of the widow Jay in Spring Street.

For a few moments Major Mason had risen above the strata of his anxieties. The little breath of sympathy had been grateful to him; for he had one of those fine natures that are capable of receiving a kindness—a far rarer excellence than that of doing one. He returned to his daughter with a smile over his face, and, as he bent over the fire, said:

"This was an unusual effort for Mr. Keteltas to make, Virginia. How much better are men than they themselves know!"

"He never named his daughter. This quarrel between the President and the Bank seems to fill every man's measure of feeling. Is it really such an important affair, father?"

"It has, at least, Virginia, that atmosphere about it which we call the spirit of the time; and as long as it magnifies the subject, we shall be deceived both as to its truth and its importance. In the interim many will suffer, and there will be dissension and bitter feeling." Then, seeing that he had an interested listener, he explained the quarrel in words which he considered suitable to a woman's comprehension of national and monetary affairs.

"The United States Bank has been for many years the place of deposit for the money belonging to the Government. It has become enormously wealthy and enormously powerful. It is said to use its wealth for political purposes. Its first charter is nearly out. It naturally wants a new charter, and it has money enough to buy every vote in Congress."

"Every vote that is *buyable*, you mean, father?"

"Certainly. We must suppose there are men whom no money could buy. Nevertheless, it is asserted that Webster's checks for

five thousand dollars have been honored when he had not a dollar in the bank. You can see how such an institution, having millions at its command, hampers the Government; is stronger than the Government; *is the Government*. Jackson regards it as a Babylonish monster of iniquity, and believes its power to be destructive to all constitutional liberty. He has said it shall never be rechartered, and it never will be. He has already begun to remove the Government deposits, and to put them in other banks. These favored banks are in collision with the branches of the United States Bank; and in consequence there is an awful scarcity of money, and great distress among merchants who need credit to sustain them. Stocks of every kind have fallen; good notes can hardly be discounted at nine per cent., and I am afraid, Virginia, that this is only the beginning of the trouble. But, indeed, my dear girl, as you cannot help affairs in any way, you might just as well not make yourself anxious about them."

"But they make you anxious, father; and whatever does that I must feel."

"Let us have a game of chess. You shall be the United States Bank and I will be General Jackson."

"You know you will checkmate me in a dozen moves."

"That will carry out the proposition. The

Bank is already checkmated in Jackson's mind. He has only the moves to make."

Chess or conversation, it was the same; no subject long dismissed the central one; and the Major, having explained it to his daughter, now felt at liberty to go on amplifying his explanations. Virginia dutifully tried to understand and to sympathize; but, after all, the long talk about deposits, discounts, and stocks did not touch her half so sensibly as the common words of loss and poverty which had fallen from her father's lips in the morning: "A few thousands, and we can still live without them." That simple resignation to a curtailed life brought the Bank trouble very close to her comprehension.

She was weary and thoughtful, but the nearness of the "Arethusa" filled her with tremulous hopes and happiness. She was sure that her lover was at hand. And, as Love takes the character of the souls into which it enters, Marius had grown insensibly to harmonious excellence in Virginia's imagination. She had given to him the charm of her own nature—the charm of delicacy undulled; of a mind nimble and flexible, loving with an eternal uprightness, always faithful and affectionate.

They played three games, and she was conscious of a superstitious disposition to fairly beat her antagonist. But even in mock warfare General Jackson's good fortune was vic-

torious. Both sighed at the result. "The Bank goes," said the Major. "That thin, stern old man is its Fate. It will crumble before him." He took his book and drew nearer to the fire. There were no other words but "good-night" to say, and they fell with an unconscious sadness from Virginia's lips.

She saw that her father wished to be alone, but she could not really leave him. Into the solitude of her room she took the memory of his pale, thoughtful face. She understood that he was bravely and quietly facing financial ruin, because he believed his private loss would help the public gain. And it was no wrong to him that, in the living, loving alcove of her heart, she gave another a place very near to him—the young, handsome sailor, outriding wind and waves, and carrying his precious fate of human life safely from shore to shore.

It was her custom always to read the prayers for the evening service. But she had now come to one of those straits in life's journey where humanity feels the need of something closer and more personal than the general form. Humbly kneeling, she read the words with a reverent spirit, and then silently let that holy imagination which is the eye of the soul rise beyond the words. Then she was strengthened and comforted; for God listens to thoughts and feelings, and inward words are the words he hears.

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE'S RENUNCIATION.

"Now too—the joy most like divine,
Of all I ever dreamt or knew,
To see thee, hear thee. call thee mine,
Oh, misery! must I lose that, too?"

"For money, like the sword of kings,
Is the last reason of all things."

"And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils, with a crutch-like rod."

AT sunset on this same evening, while Virginia was casting off from her the influence of the day's worry and dissatisfaction, the "Arethusa" came to anchor in the bay. Her passengers were removed on a small steamer, but Captain Bradford did not leave his ship. He was in high spirits, for he had the hope of very soon seeing the woman whom he loved with an entire and sacred affection.

He was sitting in placid happiness enjoying the quiet cabin, when he heard a merry laugh that went to his heart like music.

"Why, Jack!" he cried, as the young man came with a glowing face to his side, "I did not expect to see you to-night."

"A boat going down the river took me in; and I knew you would get me back somehow early in the morning; and, oh, Marius! I did want to see you so much."

"Nothing wrong, I hope, Jack?"

"Why do people in uncertainty always suspect wrong before right? No, there is nothing at all wrong, Marius."

"Something pleasant, then?"

"Yes, something wonderful, something delightful, something sweeter than you can imagine.

"Why, Jack! You never can have dared to fall in love again."

"I am fathoms deep, I am unfathomably deep in love. I am over head and heart. I am the happiest and the most unhappy man in New York."

He looked straight into his brother's eyes with a frankness that in some way expressed all he wished to.

"You are a most imprudent young man, then. How are you going to live on seven hundred dollars a year?"

"I have not come to that question yet, Marius. When I do, I shall very likely have a much larger income. You see the lady is a good deal above me—socially."

"You always were one to look upward, Jack. Now, who is it? You must tell me everything or nothing."

"Do you remember the Miss Mason who came back from Europe with you?—why, it was on the last trip of the 'Arethusa.' That is the reason I could not wait an hour to see you. I thought you could tell me something about her—that I could talk of her to you. Oh, Marius! I love her! I love her better than my own life——"

While he was speaking Marius rose and pretended to look for his pipe. If his brother had struck him, he could not have felt the blow more keenly, even in a physical sense. He was sick, faint, blind; he reeled like a drunken man, and could find nothing but a rough ejaculation to relieve the terrible mental shock, and equally terrible physical recoil.

But Jack was possessed by the selfish passion of a lover. He perceived nothing of his brother's misery; he was only a trifle annoyed at what he thought the "indifference" to his own condition. Why did Marius not wait for his pipe? The movement, and the opening and shutting of a drawer, broke the charm of his confidence.

In a few moments the pipe was found and filled, and Marius sat down again. His face was white through all its tan of wind and sun; his hands trembled, he could not lift his eyes to the eyes searching his for sympathy. It struck Jack in a few minutes that something

was troubling his brother, and he said, with an air of anxiety, "Marius, you look sick."

"I am very tired, Jack. The voyage has been long and stormy. So you are in love with Miss Mason? Yes, she came over with me on my last trip. She is a very beautiful women. How did you find that out?"

"Cruger & Cushing are Major Mason's lawyers. There has been a deal of business lately—money matters and mortgages. I was frequently sent to Major Mason's house with letters and papers; and at the third time, the Major introduced me to Miss Mason. Always afterward I talked with her, while he wrote the answers to whatever information I brought. I could not help loving her. I do not believe any man could."

"Do you think she cares for you—in that way, Jack?"

"I hope so."

"Oh, Jack, ask yourself this question truly and answer it truly: Do you really think she—returns your love? I mean, does she feel toward you as you do to her? or is she simply pleasant, as she would be to any visitor? Now, Jack, be true to yourself and to her. Take a few minutes to think, and do not be deceived."

"I have thought. I have done nothing else but think for three weeks, and I do believe she

feels an interest in me she does not feel for ordinary callers. Once I——"

"Go on."

"Once I caught her looking at me. I never was looked at just in the same way. She seemed trying to find out something in my face, and her eyes were full of kindness. Do you not think she was trying to find out if I loved her?"

"No. That would be very unlike her; very unlike, indeed."

"Well, she looked at me, and when she saw I had caught the look, she turned scarlet and left the room. I was sent there to-day, but I think she was out of the house. I can always feel when she is present, even if I do not see her. You are not as interested as I thought you would be, Marius. I expected 'Jack's love affair' would be a wonderful thing to you. I have been longing to see you."

"Jack, all that interests you interests me also. My God! do you not know that?" He spoke with great emotion, and looked almost reproachfully into the young man's face.

"Of course I know it, Marius. That is the reason I could not wait until morning. I fancied we should sit up all night and talk of Virginia—that is her name. *Virginia!* I say it thousands of times each day. I write it all over my papers if I do not watch myself. I tell you, she has made me go over many a

page. I cannot trust myself; her name creeps into everything. Oh, Marius! have you ever been in love? If you have not—you will certainly think I am crazy."

Marius looked at him. The young man had forgotten his own confidence on the same subject; for of all selfish things, youth is the most selfish. Marius did not remind him of the circumstance; and he let Jack talk of the mistress of his heart. He described her dresses, her attitudes, and the situations in which he had seen her. All her words were retold, and her smiles analyzed and commented on. Marius listened, bearing bravely and silently the torture, just as he would have borne a physical amputation.

But it was a great relief when he persuaded Jack to lie down and sleep. Then he trailed his weary, heavy heart and body up the companion-way to the nearly deserted deck. The watch was forward; he went aft, and was alone with his sorrow. For some time he leaned over the stern in a maze of tangled thought and feeling. He could not find a clew out of it. Thought simply drifted. Sorrow filled him to the eyes and ears.

All his life long he had lived for others. The wages of his youth, the savings of his manhood, he had given out with both hands. And money had been the least of his kindness. Love, free, full, self-denying love, had crowned

every meaner gift. As for his brother Jack, he had been the dearest of his hopes. He had grudged him nothing of all the joys and privileges his own youth had missed. He loved the lad with all his soul. He was father and brother both to him. If any other man had been his rival, he could have borne it better. It would have been a natural sorrow. This seemed unnatural, almost fratricidal, in spite of its innocent ignorance; and he could not help reproaching Fate with this needless suffering.

"It was the very first draught of purely personal joy I ever had," he said bitterly; "and Jack, of all men, takes the blessed cup from my lips. It is hard! It is too hard to bear!"

And oh! how bitter are those moments of temptation when we say—"in vain we have been loving and generous and self-sacrificing." God has failed to recompense us, and we have a sense of injustice and regret that we served him. No thoughts are more cruel. They touch the questions of infinity, and have an infinite power to make us suffer. The soul of Marius Bradford swelled to them, and, ere he knew it, heavy tears dropped down into the dark water beneath him.

But this was a blessed rain; it softened and soothed his aching heart. Grief that had been solid and stubborn ran into motion; he began to pace the deck, and to set his turbulent

thoughts in order. The great dusky waterway behind and beneath him, the majestic constellations above, the silent city before him, all spoke a language that he understood. They hushed and quieted his heart. The cradling swell of the water whispered, "Thou art my son. Thy home is on my breast." The stars said, "O true heart! be steadfast in duty; even we have our courses and our goings-on, and are obedient to His will." And when he turned to the dreaming city, he thought of one of its homes as of a holy shrine. The sleeping woman in it lay like a spotless lily in his memory. God had made nothing fairer, sweeter, purer. Involuntarily he bared his head as he whispered her name.

Was there anything he would not do to make her happy? If she was in danger, would he not die smilingly if he could save her? If she was perishing of thirst, would he not gladly take the water from his own lips that she might drink? Well, then, here was a strait no way different. Jack was younger, handsomer, every way more desirable than he was. Yes; he must stand aside, and give Jack a fair chance. "I can be a good brother to her," he whispered. "God help me! God help me!"

So he passed the night in renunciation, and in such prayer as leaps from the soul as fire leaps from the beaten iron. When the day

dawned, he had grasped the strength of the conflict. He was able to meet his brother, and to look with a brave and honest kindness in his face; able to say:

"I did not tell you last night, Jack, that I had a small parcel for Miss Mason—a couple of yards of silk she made a mistake about. I wish you would take them to her."

"You know I will be delighted, Marius."

"My rough voyage has belated me. I shall be busy enough to get ready for sailing time. Give my respects to the young lady, and also to Major Mason—that is, if they care for them; but the captain, though a great man at sea, is nobody on shore."

"Who would wish to forget you that had ever sailed with you, Marius? Where is the parcel? Get it for me. I am grateful for any excuse to ask for Miss Mason."

With the silk in his hand he gayly left the ship, and at the noon hour hastened up Broadway on his pleasant errand. Some left-handed influence was perhaps offended at his radiant face, his happy step, his general air of satisfaction, for when he arrived at his destination he found Miss Mason from home; and was further defrauded by a self-complacent servant, who said, with an air of knowledge, that he had "better leave the parcel," and this advice he had not the courage to neglect.

He turned slowly away, irresolute and angry,

and went northward instead of southward. He was not only disappointed, he was very much chagrined; and his first impulse was to walk away the influence of the unpleasant *rencontre*. He was also aware of the friendship between Virginia and Miss Keteltas, and there was doubtless a vague hope in his heart of meeting her somewhere on the road between the Mason and Keteltas houses.

At Union Square he saw an acquaintance, and stood talking with him about the opening up of the streets running from the Park, and the iron fencing with which the men under his direction were inclosing it. The day, though bright, was very cold; and the workmen had built a fire, and were eating their dinners around it; some talking with great vehemence, others smoking and listening.

"There is an abolitionist among them," said Jack's friend, and he took Jack by the arm, and led him to the excited group. A tall, earnest man was in the center. He had a slip of paper in his hand, with a rude woodcut on it representing a negro chained and under the lash; and his thin, kind face was alight with enthusiasm as he cried out, "I would not own a slave for all the wealth that bought-and-sold sinews ever earned!"

"Say, Mister," asked a long, lean fellow, who had been listening with impatience, "why don't they set themselves free? Fifty, a hun-

dred, two or three hundred, a thousand on a plantation, and only one or two oppressors over them! Gosh! the meanest white men that ever lifted spade or shovel would have turned the tables long ago."

At this point there was the confused murmur of a crowd coming up Broadway, and the little congregation in the Square broke and went toward it. The lecturer, with his hat pushed back and a fine scorn in his eye, looked after them a moment.

Jack, with his friend, followed the down-town movement. On the high banks on either side of the way little groups were leaning against the fences watching. It was only a few minutes ere the crowd, with shouts and singing, turned into Broadway. Jack knew the rhyme, and lifted his voice with the rest:

Ho! for the Livingston horse!
Boys, now open your lips,
Hats and caps fly up like a cloud,
With hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
And hurrah for Eclipse!

Ho! for the Livingston horse!
Boys, now open your lips,
Hearts break out with a mighty shout,
With hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
And hurrah for Eclipse!

The rough melody filled the clear air, and the splendid animal, led by his groom, lifted his head and stepped proudly to the adulation

of his admirers. Being the noon resting hour, workmen from all points lined Broadway and shouted—"Hurrah!" and "Eclipse!" and threw their caps up to the magnificent creature.

They watched him till his proud head was no longer visible, and then Jack bid his companion "adieu" and hurried to his office. The annoyance, put aside for half an hour, returned with greater intensity. He longed for night, that he might go to Marius with his new trouble; for he had the lover's faculty of tormenting himself, and he felt sure that Virginia had given orders to her servants to deny her to him.

On the contrary, Virginia had very regretfully left her home on a request from Jane Keteltas so urgent as to force her compliance; and she did not return to it until the short winter day had nearly vanished. As she passed through the hall a servant said, "The young gentleman from Cruger & Cushing's brought a parcel here at noon, Miss Virginia."

"Where is it?"

"I laid it on the table of the large parlor."

"Leave it there. I will get it after dinner."

"More trouble," she thought. "But nothing can be done until to-morrow, and why bring to-morrow into to-day?"

She was depressed by fear, but she made a careful toilet; for certainly she expected

Marius would call. The "Arethusa" was in port, and "he is sure to come," she whispered.

Major Mason was unusually cheerful, and during the serving of dinner talked of the President and the Bank with a gentlemanly passion of enthusiasm. "Even if Jackson has the battle to fight single-handed, he can do it," he said admiringly.

"Is it not just possible that Jackson may be wrong?"

"Jackson is right—constitutionally right, morally right."

"New York is suffering dreadfully. Mr. Keteltas says he never remembers such commercial distress; there is almost a panic. He thinks very ill of President Jackson."

"New York suffers nobly. She stands by Jackson, right or wrong—I mean, in prosperity or adversity. As for Mr. Keteltas, and men like him, why should they complain? The harder the times, the more interest they get for loans and advances. All true patriots stand by the President. They know he is right. And the opposition might as well submit; they cannot move Jackson by threats of commercial ruin; nor can he be bribed to alter the course he thinks for the public good. Very well; it is the part of good citizens to waive their own inclinations and support the Government."

The injustice of this reasoning was evident to

Virginia; but why should she join the opposition party? It is so easy and generally so wise for women to answer arguments with a smile and a little nod. To themselves it may mean an entire approval of their reserved opinions; men generally accept it as an approval of theirs, and prefer it to either reason or eloquence. Major Mason thought his daughter sympathetic and sensible; and he talked away all the residuum of fret and uncertainty which his disputes with Mr. Jay and Mr. Cruger on the same subject had left at the bottom of his heart.

When they were alone he turned at once to points more personal. "Why did Jane send so hurriedly for you this morning?"

"There has been a very unhappy dispute about the wedding ceremony. Jane wishes to be married in Trinity. Her father is quietly in favor of the old Middle Church; and Nigel Forfar passionately and positively in favor of it. He says 'he will die a bachelor rather than submit to Episcopal mummeries.' He declared that it was a point of conscience with him, and that 'all the Forfars were firm as the adamantine hills upon points of conscience. If Jane loved a mere ceremony better than him, she must take her choice.'"

"Did not the man see he was loving a mere ceremony better than Jane?"

"No one could have made his adamantine

conscience see anything so reasonable. He took up Jane's prayer-book and repeated scornfully: '"With this ring I thee wed." I don't wed Jane with any ring,' he said. 'The ring is no more to the marriage than the seal is to the letter. "With my body I thee worship." I consider that idolatry. "With all my earthly goods I thee endow." I do nothing of the kind. I have made a very handsome settlement on Jane,' and then he added, with a peculiar emphasis, 'I am willing to add to it five thousand dollars if Jane will reasonably submit to my will in this matter.'"

"What did Mr. Keteltas say?"

"He said, 'Go to your room, Jane, and think well about Nigel's offer. I take leave to say, if Nigel is going to pay you every time he wants his own way, he will be a poor man, and you will be a rich woman, before green barley is ripe again.' And then he turned to me and added, 'Virginia, my dear, speak a few sensible words to a foolish young woman.'"

"And Mr. Forfar?"

"He was silent; but I saw a queer smile draw his mouth together when Mr. Keteltas spoke of him buying his own will; and I advised Jane to freely give up her plans, and on no account to take money for a right—for it is her right to choose the church and the minister."

"Did she?"

"She thought it a triumph to make Nigel pay her. Jane is fond of money."

"Nigel had the triumph. She won a money victory, Nigel a moral one. You know which is the greater."

"Then he objected to a bridal veil. It was English and Episcopal in its tendencies; very likely French and papistical. He thought Jane ought to wear a bonnet. A most offensive man. I came very near to a quarrel with him myself."

"About Jane?"

"No, about Captain Bradford. There was a very funny scene. Jane has a servant who is a remarkably handsome girl, from Yorkshire, I think, and she always waits on the table. To-day, after the dispute, Mr. Keteltas went downto vn, and Nigel went with him. They were delayed, and did not get home till near three o'clock. The dinner was ready at one, and spoiled at three. Both men were dissatisfied. Forfar said 'it reminded him of the dinners on the 'Arethusa';' and then Mr. Keteltas remarked the 'Arethusa' was in port after a very bad voyage, stormy and dangerous. I expressed my pleasure at the ship's safety; and Forfar wished she had gone to the bottom and taken the Captain with her."

"What did you say?"

"I had no time to say anything. The girl, Nelly, who had his plate full of pudding in her

hand, put it down in a passion at his side, and said, 'Help thysen, master. I'll not wait on thee. Thou art a right bad sort, and if I was Miss Jane, I'd think twice about marrying thee, and be sure to change my mind the second time. I would, I would that!"

The Major laughed heartily, for Virginia imitated Nelly's excitement and patois very cleverly.

"What did Forfar say?"

"For a moment he was stupefied by her passion. Nelly spoke with an incredible and irresistible eloquence. No one could stop her, and indeed I think John Paul had a great deal to do to prevent himself laughing heartily. I looked full at Nelly and smiled my approval. We understood each other in a moment. Jane rose and ordered Nelly to leave the room instantly, and with a half sob Nelly answered, 'to be sure, Miss. I'll leave the house too. I will that.'"

"I like that girl, Virginia. I wish we could employ her."

"I like her too." Forfar pushed his pudding aside, and told Jane not to worry. 'She is one of those barbarians from Yorkshire,' he said, scornfully; 'they have no manners.' Nelly had the door open in her hand, and she heard the slur on her country. It was not to be endured. She turned and answered him:

"'I have no manners, heven't I? Thou art

right, master, if ta means manners of thy sort—and I don't want them either, not I!'"

"I wonder if the girl knows Captain Bradford?"

"Jane says she came over with him in the 'Arethusa.' I dare say he was kind to her. It would be like him."

"Yes, it would. You say she is handsome?"

"Very."

On the long and suggestive text supplied by these incidents much conversation was possible; and the Major was rather merry over certain phases of it. But Virginia, as the hours crept by, grew anxious and sad, and found it difficult to continue the subject. Every footstep made her heart beat; a knock at the door even as late as nine o'clock roused her dying hopes. She stopped talking to listen. Never had a servant been so dilatory in opening a door before. Then the dreadful delay before the man entered. He had a parcel in his hand which the Major took with a fresh interest; "Some pamphlets Mr. Jay has sent me," he said to Virginia; and she trembled and was silent. The day was hopelessly over.

CHAPTER VII.

"WEDDING AND THIS WILL DO; WEDDING AND WORSE WILL NEVER DO."

"To wear out heart and nerves and brain,
And give ourselves a world of pain,
Be eager, angry, fierce, and hot,
Imperious, supple—God knows what;
O, false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
. . . . . .
Only, it is precisely this
That keeps us all alive."

"The way of love leads generally to marriage."

IN the morning Virginia remembered the parcel brought by Cruger & Cushing's young gentleman. She stood a moment at the door of the large parlor, and then decided not to trouble her father with it until after he had taken his breakfast. "It is always time enough for annoyance, and I am sure nothing else comes from Mr. Cruger but annoyance," she thought. It was a bitterly cold morning, with a prospect of snow, and she glanced into the pale, delicate face of her father with some anxiety. He had drawn his chair very close to the fire, and was looking over the new penny paper called the "Sun."

"It is really wonderful, Virginia," he said,

laying it across his knees, as she came to him. "Every poor man can now have his newspaper."

"How can a penny paper pay, father?"

"Because it is creating for itself a vast patronage among a class who have hitherto considered newspapers a luxury. Mr. Hoe has begun to make his fortune."

"I am glad some one is making money. I think I never before heard of so much trouble about money. Coffee is ready now, sir."

"Have the table drawn close to the fire, Virginia. It is a dreadful morning. Hard holidays, I fear, between the scarcity of money and the severe weather. Did I tell you I saw Dr. Wainwright yesterday? He has really given up Grace Church, and is going to Boston."

"I am very sorry."

"Mr. Cooper joined us as we were talking."

"The novelist? Is he back from Europe?"

"A month ago."

"It was supposed that he found it so superior to America that he would not return to our Western barbarism."

"Perhaps the papers are unjust to him. They would persuade us that his value of himself and his work is beyond all bounds. To me he appears a sensible gentleman."

"Mr. Cruger sent young Rhea with a parcel here yesterday; at least I suppose it was Mr.

Rhea. I did not give it to you last night, because I feared there would be annoyance in it; and it was too late to interfere in any business matter. It will do after we have breakfasted?"

"Yes. Thank you for being so thoughtful, Virginia. I dare say it is the papers relating to a mortgage I have been compelled to arrange. I have lost more than twenty thousand dollars during the last sixty days."

"Father! How has that happened?"

"Fall of stocks, my dear. Delaware & Hudson Canal Company, and Boston & Providence Railroad Company. My share of Nicholas Biddle's plutocracy."

"Of President Jackson's injustice and ill-will and——"

"Of President Jackson's patriotism, Virginia. I have received good at the hands of my country, shall I not also receive evil, if my loss means my country's gain? No one likes to lose money, but better lose money than lose principle and honor and the general freedom of the citizen. I have counted the cost, Virginia. I am with Jackson in his quarrel with the Bank."

"I think Jackson is a tyrannical autocrat."

"It takes one autocrat to put down another. And the most cruel and degrading of all tyrannies is that of money power. It has neither heart nor intellect. It is simply brutalizing,

and if it came to a fight on that subject, I would draw my sword and die cheerfully to free America from the worst of all slaveries. Indeed, it passes my comprehension that men should be crying out against the slavery of the negro, and not see and feel the golden gyves of Nicholas Biddle's Bank."

"Can we ever get away from that subject? Everything we name turns to it. I heard some children on the street talking about it yesterday."

"Every man, woman, and child feels the pinch of the Bank's cruel, greedy fingers. St. Nicholas will buy few presents for his children this year; Nicholas Biddle has stolen his purse. How cold it is! Some points below zero, I am sure."

He turned his face to the blaze, and sipped his coffee thoughtfully, until Virginia rose.

"Ring for the parcel now, Virginia. There may be a letter of importance in it."

When the servant entered the room, Virginia left it. A pitiful delicacy led her to believe that her father would prefer meeting anything unpleasant alone. He knew he was sure of her sympathy when he was ready for it. She went to the housekeeper with some directions about warming the parlors, and then listened patiently to her complaints of the servants, and of the cold weather and hard times. But all through the old lady's babble,

her heart was aching with her own disappointment and her father's anxieties.

In about an hour he called for her. When she entered the room the pink silk lay in the center of the table. A band of wintry sunshine crossed it and the paper wrappings in which it had been brought, but in spite of this, it had a neglected and unwelcome air.

She went straight to it, and lifted its glistening folds. "Was this the contents of the parcel, father? And pray, why did Mr. Rhea bring it?"

"How can I tell, Virginia? Martin brought it to me. I expected papers, and I found silk."

She was heartsick, but anger was gathering, and it gave her a fictitious strength. With visible chagrin she turned over and over the wrapping it had come in—perhaps there had been a note or message inside. But there was nothing at all to identify the silk as hers but the name of the Liverpool house on the out side cover. She rang the bell impetuously, and when Martin answered its call she questioned him closely concerning it.

"Who brought this parcel?"

"The young gentleman from Mr. Cruger's office."

"Mr. Rhea?"

"Yes, Miss."

"Then give him his proper name in future. What did he say? Tell me the exact words."

"When I opened the door he said, 'Is Miss Mason in?' I said, 'No, you wasn't in,' Miss, 'and I didn't think you would be in until late.'"

"You had no authority to say that. What else?"

"I said if the parcel was for you, he had better leave it. He gave it to me, and went away."

"Did he say from whom he received the parcel?"

"No, Miss."

"Did he leave any message?"

"No, Miss."

"What time was he here?"

"Between twelve and one o'clock."

"You were eating your dinner?"

"Yes, Miss."

"And in too great hurry to give Mr. Rhea time to explain anything. That will do."

As the door closed she turned to her father: "How did Mr. Rhea get the parcel, do you think?"

"Indeed, Virginia, I cannot imagine. Does it matter? Perhaps some friend of the firm was on board the 'Arethusa,' and he was sent to assist them in disembarking. Did you give Captain Bradford the money to pay for the silk?"

"I never thought of such a thing."

"Very woman-like. But the silk mercer

would think of it, and Captain Bradford doubtless paid the price. He is just the man who would send the silk by a strange hand, lest you should think, if he brought it himself, he wanted the money refunded. Don't you understand this?"

"I don't know."

"How much are you owing for it?"

"A sovereign."

"I will send it to the 'Arethusa.'"

"Oh, I do not think I would—just yet. It feels vulgar to do a thing like that."

"To pay what you owe?"

"This is different; it was a favor. If you send the money, it is like saying, 'Much obliged, and now we are clear of each other.'"

"Well? Is not that about right?"

"I suppose so. No, I do not think it is. I think Captain Bradford would rather have thanks than money. Perhaps he may call. If not——"

"I shall send the money."

"When you are next at Mr. Cruger's, you will doubtless see Mr. Rhea. Ask him how he got the silk? Are you going out to-day?"

"Not unless I am compelled to go out. It is too cold to leave the fire."

She lifted the silk, then, and left the room. It hurt her sight; it hurt her touch. She flung it on her bed, and fell down weeping beside it.

"He might have brought it!" she sobbed. "He said he would bring it. He said so much to me—so much that words could never say. And I believed his eyes! I thought I saw a true soul through them. Oh, Marius! Marius! you have broken my heart in two."

She really felt at the moment as if the exaggeration was the fact. A crushing disappointment overwhelmed her. Until that hour she had not understood how completely Marius had taken possession of her heart. The loss of money—the private grief of her father—the puplic distress—none of these things were remembered in the passionate sorrow whose waves and billows went over her.

For the first great grief of womanhood had found her out. And the bitter grapes of this hard harvest the noblest women press out alone. The idea of sympathy or of consolation never came to Virginia. The trial was one to be buried in her heart, though it wounded it with every breath she drew. A wounded heart! Oh, cruel words! full of a terrible significance to thousands who endure and hide endurance behind smiles.

A kind of resentment succeeded her grief. She rose up and washed her face, and walked swiftly about the room, murmuring, "Oh, if the past were only mine! Three weeks I would wipe out forever! I would forget absolutely the 'Arethusa.' I would forget for-

ever"—she could not utter the name of the man she would forget. There was still hope at the bottom of her heart.

The feeling was not peculiar to Virginia. Most people have had at some period of their life this insane desire to rob the Past. They have wished to annihilate certain events in their career, being sure that they could only bring forth sorrow. Let us be very thankful that the Past is as unattainable to us as the Future. If it were not, we should recklessly rob it; and in so doing, impoverish the whole of our future life.

Because our knowledge is so small! our vision is so short! our faith is so weak! If Virginia had only known! If she could have seen! If her faith, even in herself and her own pure intuitions, had been stronger! Then her grief would have been altered both in its direction and its intensity. For, whatever her disappointment and suffering, that of Marius was far greater.

It would have seemed as if the United States Bank could hardly interfere in Captain Bradford's secret love affair; but it did. As soon as Jack had returned to his office after his unfortunate delivery of his brother's message, he received orders to leave at once for Philadelphia. For he filled the post of confidential clerk, and the great law firm had some papers containing intelligence to send to Mr. Biddle.

Jack had no time even to write to his brother. Indeed, a letter never struck him as at all necessary. Marius had sent a little silk to Miss Mason, and Jack never supposed that his brother had any interest in it beyond its safe delivery. Miss Mason was a strictly personal subject in Jack's thoughts; that Marius was in love with her was a supposition that simply never entered Jack's mind.

When he had finished his business in Philadelphia he thought of writing; but he reflected that he would probably be back in New York as soon as a letter, and he abandoned the idea. After all, if he had written he might never have named the silk. It had failed as far as he was concerned, and he attached no further importance to it. But Marius carried that parcel on his heart night and day. He imagined Jack's giving it to her. He imagined her pretty pleasure in the perfect match; her pretty surprise in discovering that Jack was his brother. He himself was very proud of the handsome youth; and he mentally contrasted Jack's elegance and fashionable appearance with the rougher type of his own manhood. Yes, and he did Virginia the injustice to believe that she would prefer Jack to himself.

He was quite sure Jack would come to the ship and take his tea with him. The day was a hard one. They were putting in cargo, and

he was blown about by the icy wind coming down the Hudson; but he put off his tea hour to the time Jack usually reached him. Of course Jack disappointed him; and Marius felt his absence to be specially cruel. "He was afraid of the cold, I suppose," he said bitterly to himself; "or perhaps *she* asked him to spend the evening with her." He drank his solitary tea gloomily to the thought. But a kinder one came as he sat in the midst of his Indian incense. "I gave my chance to Jack, and I must not grumble if he makes the most of it. He ought to do so; if he did not, I would think little of him."

But as day after day passed, and Jack did not come near the ship, his anger gathered; for he did not always remember to tell himself that Jack was ignorant both of his self-denial and his suffering; the self-denial and suffering being real things, and Jack's ignorance of them requiring a conscious effort to grasp. But he was too busy, and perhaps too angry, to make inquiries, and the "Arethusa" was on the point of sailing when Jack, out of breath with his rapid running, stood at last by the side of his brother. For a moment Marius refused to see him. He was heartsore, and not skilled in hiding any feeling by which he was possessed.

"I was terrified lest you might have sailed before I got here!"

"You? At last?"

"I have been to Philadelphia. I left a few hours after I last saw you."

Then Marius looked in the flushed face of the speaker and smiled faintly. "You ought to have sent me word, Jack."

'I went in such a hurry, and I thought——"

"Never mind. The silk? Did you give it to Miss Mason?"

"I had the worst luck. I went at noon with it, and she was out"

"Then you have it yet. She must think me a precious liar. I promised to bring it with me. She has been expecting it for nearly a week. It is too bad, Jack."

"She has the silk. A servant took it from me, and of course he gave it to her that day."

"You let a servant take it to her? Jack, I am ashamed of you."

"Don't look so black, Marius. I was too dashed to have wit enough at the time to keep my introduction until a more favorable hour. But I fully intended to go to Mr. Mason's that night, ask to see Miss—Virginia, give your message, and inquire as to the fate of the parcel left. But it was Philadelphia for me instead. I am just home. Of course you were my first thought."

The eager, loving words went straight to the wounded heart of Marius. He put his hand upon Jack's shoulder and said:

"Well, well, I dare say it is all right. She

has the silk, and she would care very little whose hand brought it. I would not trouble her again. It will look as if we wanted her either to say 'thank you' or to pay the money. When a thing begins unluckily, let it alone, Jack. Now, my dear boy, we must say 'good-by' again. They are for the anchor, it will soon be a-trip. God bless you! Be good, Jack." He rubbed his brown cheek against the young fresh one so dear to him; and then turned away with a shout and a sharp order to the boatswain that rung along the ship like a trumpet.

A snowstorm was just beginning, and Jack stood on the cold, windy slip, and watched the "Arethusa" spread her sails and fill them with the strong west wind. They looked ghastly white between the black water and the heavy sky. The men moved about in the driving flakes, blown hither and thither, and were like men in some awful prison-house. But Jack's gaze hardly took in their unreality; it was fixed upon the man wrapped in a pilot coat, whose voice penetrated the misty space, and whose brown radiating countenance was firmly gazing out toward the stormy ocean.

"He looks like a king," thought Jack; "and the gleam of the gold band round his cap might be his crown."

Marius was glad to face the sea again; glad to feel the strong wind blowing, and to know

that he would have to pitch his skill and his stanch ship against the blind, blustering forces of nature. His spirit rose to the struggle. He forgot Virginia and all his chagrin and heart-longing and heart-aching. He had fifty lives and a valuable cargo in his keeping, and as the wind howled louder, and the waves rose in billowy mountains around the "Arethusa," his spirits rose with them; he was gay as a bridegroom. The ship felt his influence, the sailors caught his mood, every quick order met a ready "Aye, aye, sir!" Hurrying footsteps, passing words, rattle of shifting chains and blowing sails, all the bluster of nature, all the shrill minor notes of human struggle and defiance, had in them tones which set the Captain's heart beating to an heroic measure.

For two days and nights he had little space for dreams of love. Its soft relaxing reveries were impossible in the tumult of the storm. When a thought of Virginia came, it was usually with the shipping of a wave, or the rending of a sail, or the breaking of a spar, and it took to itself some of the quick strength of its environment—a momentary memory of a fair, sweet face that always brought a fervent "God bless her!" from his lips, and a turning with a new strength to his duty.

Somehow, as he sailed away from her, he felt her closer to him. He did not know that her soul was pursuing him with prayers and

loving longings. But, oh! how many of our comforts spring from unknown sources! The prayer we are ignorant of has sent our angel to strengthen us; the love we have forgotten goes before, surrounds, and pervades us with its comforting atmosphere. We cannot escape soul influence; good or bad, the circumference of the earth will not prevent this force from tending to that point to which its aspirations, its hopes, its love or its hatred attract it.

And Virginia's soul kept a constant care and prayer for her sailor lover. She watched daily, hourly, for some news from him, until she knew the "Arethusa" was out at sea; and then she settled herself in a firm conviction of his truth and honor. Circumstances might accuse him, but the diviner within told her Marius was everything she believed him to be. Unfortunately, Jack's absence delayed an opportunity for explanation, and when he returned, the business which had taken the Major so often to Cruger's, and Jack so often to the Mason house, was completed.

During this interval Virginia hoped every evening to hear something about Mr. Rhea and the parcel; but the circumstance appeared to have passed beyond hope of further mention. It was not until the morning of Jane's wedding that any reference was made to it. This was in the middle of the festival week between Christmas and the New Year. But

there was little of the air of festivity about the time. The weather was cruelly cold; the city miserably anxious and depressed. Everything was uncertain and hopeless. But marrying and dying go on though the heavens fall; and Jane and Forfar, in the importance of their personal affairs, scarce gave a thought to public grievance. The twenty-ninth of December was their bridal day, and the earth moved on its axis specially for that event

It was one of the coldest and dreariest of days and Major Mason shivered anticipatively as he looked into the snow-bound street and at the low thermometer. About ten o'clock Virginia came down dressed for the ceremony. She wore a gown of pink silk, and a large cloak of minever lined with pink silk, and fastened at the throat with a handsome silver clasp. The Major looked with admiration at his beautiful daughter, and as he put on his gloves said:

"So that is the dress for which Captain Bradford brought you some silk? It is very pretty. Did I tell you that I had paid for the silk? You may wear it with perfect satisfaction."

"You did not tell me, father. Whom did you pay?"

"I was in Cruger's last Monday, and I saw young Rhea writing at his desk. He looked at me when I entered, and smiled very pleasantly; and I thought perhaps he wished to

remind me of the silk; you see, he may have paid Captain Bradford for it. Mr. Cruger and I had a few words about some stock, and I was a little ill-tempered, or I should have asked him a few questions."

"Did you not ask him how he got the silk?"

"No; as I told you, I was annoyed at Mr. Cruger, and when I passed through the outer office Rhea lifted his eyes to me again. It nettled me at the moment. I felt as if he was dunning me, and I took a ten-dollar piece from my purse, and laid it down beside him. He looked astonished, and I said, 'Give it with Miss Mason's and my own respects to Captain Bradford. It is the price of the silk he bought in Liverpool for Miss Mason.' He still looked amazed, and I continued, 'I suppose Captain Bradford gave you the silk?' He said, 'Yes, sir,' and I added, 'All right, then! Can you give him the money, or will it be an inconvenience?' He said it would be no inconvenience, and so I left it with him."

"I wish you had not. Oh, father! I fear you have done something unkind."

"How? How? Nonsense! You could not permit yourself to owe Captain Bradford a sovereign."

"I feel that too. But I think one of us ought to have personally acknowledged and paid the debt."

"Out of the question. He would never expect such a thing—especially this dreadful weather." But the Major was again irritated by the circumstance, and a sudden suspicious thought made him glance inquisitively at his daughter. In this querulous, unhappy mood they started for Jane's wedding.

In spite of the chill and the gloomy surroundings the bride was exceedingly lovely. Her simple dress of white satin was clasped and buttoned with Roman cameos. Her fair hair was braided down her face, and a long veil of silver tulle covered it; and from her brow and throat crescents made of jewels of great value depended. She was exceedingly proud of the latter ornaments, and she made Virginia carefully examine them

"They are Nigel's bridal gift," she said, with a trembling delight. "He gave them to me last night. They were bought at Bapst's in Paris. He is a jeweler to the Crown, you know. These are Indian table-diamonds, and Nigel says the crescents were originally made for Hortense Beauharnais, by Bonaparte's order. Queen Hortense sold them last year when she was in Paris very poor, and M. Bapst bought them—for me, as it appears. Is it not singular? Nigel says the moment he saw them he thought of them as my bridal present."

"But he had not seen you then?"

"Oh, but his father had talked to him about me! He says he has always looked upon me as his wife; ever since he was a boy. Isn't it romantic?"

"My dear Jane, very romantic. But you must take a warm cloak; it is a miserably cold morning, and I hope the church will be well warmed."

"I am in a fever, I think. I do not feel the cold. The church will be warmed, no doubt."

On the contrary, the church was cold and dreary as a vault; and the ceremony was hurried through as quickly as possible. The guests shivered, and the only cheery persons present were Virginia and young Harry Keteltas, who had left his studies, and was in an irrepressibly good humor, and disposed to make merry over the event. But the wedding breakfast was not a joyous feast, in spite of all attempts to believe it so; because the only people who really had any interest in its success, preferred to keep their own joy quite outside its participation. Forfar, indeed, resented the intrusion of so many strangers into his happiness; and Jane at this period of her life was but an echo of all Forfar's opinions.

At three o'clock the bride and bridegoom began their life journey together. Jane waved her hand to her father and brother and friend; Nigel lifted his hat, and in a few moments the past was all past and out of sight.

Keteltas turned in from the door with a sigh, and the company followed him.

But the depression was greater now than ever, and the wedding guests departed very quickly. John Paul was glad when they left him alone with his son and his pipe. It was only to Virginia he said, "Come and see me soon, my dear. I want to talk to you."

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE AND LIGHT WILL NOT HIDE

" For loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game ;
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shined upon.

. . . . .

" My mind on its own center stands unmoved,
And stable as the fabric of the soul
Propt on itself."

THE year 1834 inaugurated in most New York families an era of economy and curtailment. The Masons had been aware of the necessity for some time, and had rearranged their household to meet it. The two men-servants who had loitered with easy dignity about their easy duties, were dismissed, and Nelly Haworth, the Yorkshire girl who had so recklessly thrown up her position in the Ketelta's house, had cheerfully agreed to perform their duties for considerably less than half their wages.

About Nellie's advent there had been some hesitation in Virginia's mind. Under the influence of anger, Jane had spoken of the girl's acquaintance with Captain Bradford in dubious terms :

"Of course, Virginia, you have no necessity to know anything about Nelly's love affairs; they will not interfere very much with her daily duties, unless you or the Major should happen to say a word against Captain Bradford."

"We are not likely to do so, Jane. We know nothing but good of Captain Bradford."

"Perhaps you do not know as much as others do. It is most certain that Nelly spends every spare hour she has in knitting things for his comfort, and on his last voyage the 'Arethusa' was no sooner at her pier than he sent a sailor with a letter for her."

"How do you know Captain Bradford sent the sailor?"

"The man had 'Arethusa' on his cap; besides, I heard him mention Captain Bradford."

"Yet I can imagine occasions for such intercourse which would be innocent, and even honorable, to both parties. Perhaps the Captain was the bearer of news from her relatives."

"As if there was not the mail for relatives to send messages by!"

"Well, it is none of my business to pry into Nelly's friendships, and I think I shall engage her. She is clean, orderly, and understands how to keep the rooms pleasant and to wait on the dining-table; you admit that much?"

"She is simply worth a dozen ordinary servants—if you do not mind her free tongue

and her queer patois; your visitors will think her vulgar, I fear."

"Nelly will not talk to the visitors."

"If you can prevent it."

"We shall not abuse Captain Bradford."

So, with a strange mingling of good-will and reluctance, Nelly Haworth joined the Mason family. The Major was at once delighted with her. He liked her frank, handsome face, her trig, tidy ways, her cheerful air; and her blunt, doric speech interested him very much. "You know, Virginia, the Masons are a Yorkshire family, originally, and it really seems to me as if the patois had a homelike echo. Perhaps my spiritual ears remember it."

"They have never heard it before."

"Oh, Virginia! little do we know on that subject. How old is my soul?"

"How old is your body, father?"

"That has nothing to do with the question Virginia. My body changes continually; years, decades, pass, and my soul is the same. I am sure of its identity, I am sure of its responsibility for deeds done years ago. My soul has no age, and it does not grow old. It had no age when it was incarnated in this body. It will have no age when life ceases, and it frees itself from its earthly vestment. It will be no older when reincarnated on this or on some other planet. It will not grow old in eternity, and the ages flowing over it will

leave less trace than the summer dew upon the ocean."

"Father, Dr. Wainwright told you not to let your mind dwell on such ideas. He said the supernatural was beyond our understanding."

"Yet, if there be not a supernatural element within us, then no evidence, and no miracle, can ever authenticate the supernatural to us. Virginia, there is in man a spiritual center answering to a higher spiritual center in the universe. All controversies and all dogmas must come back to this—the light of the supernatural without, supported by the kindling sense of the supernatural within."

Virginia did not answer him, and he turned his chair toward the fire and let his eyes fall upon its glowing embers. She knew the mood he had entered into, and knew also that he would not care to be disturbed until he had followed out the train of thought whose beginnings he held.

It seemed a kind of sacrilege to sit at his side considering her own small worries and selfish anxieties, and after a short pause she quietly rose and left the room. Six weeks had elapsed since Jane's marriage—a long, slow six weeks, in which nothing pleasant had happened. This monotony of depression had become irritating. She was weary of the never-ceasing complaints about Jackson, and the Bank, and the removal of the deposits, and

the dearness of provisions, and the scarcity of money. For the first time in her life she had been checked in her private expenditure. She had begun to spell the word "poverty" with a kind of pitying wonder and fear for herself in the hard, new lesson.

It seemed this day as if something *must* happen to break that sameness which almost doubles trials. She did not feel able to escape the present, as her father was doing, by a soul flight into the future. She was ignobly depressed and limited by the longings and disappointments of the more material life. And the tyranny of the atmosphere—the gray, cold weather, the spiteful east wind—affected her as they had never done before. When she reached her own room she looked into the street and shuddered at the banks of soiled snow, and the skeletons of trees stripped by the winter winds.

"What is the matter with me?" she asked, almost angrily; and she wisely sat down to consider, and to answer to herself the question: "Is it the loss of money? or the marriage of Jane? or the disappointment about Marius?"

She put the last question last, because it was the first in her mind; and it still remained persistent and unanswered, after she had disposed of the other two with little mental query or pain. "Well, then, *it is Marius*," she said.

positively, putting her feet upon the fender, and resolutely facing the truth.

"I am disappointed because he did not bring the silk. I am annoyed because father sent the money by Mr. Rhea without any inquiry or visible expression of courtesy. I am worried about Marius—and Nelly." She hesitated at this admission and blushed vividly as she compelled herself to make it. "So far, true. Now, what have been the consequences?" She considered them frankly, and as frankly told herself the truth, when by honest self-examination she reached it:

"I have been miserably selfish, and not only unhappy myself but the cause of unhappiness to others. I have fallen below all that duty required of me. My father and the rest of the household have a right to expect help, sympathy, and refreshing cheerfulness. I have not given them. I can see plainly that every one has lately gone away from me disappointed; just as they would turn from a spring dried up. Even my father, whom I dearly love, I have not made happy. My lassitude has exhausted him, my silence and preoccupation depressed him. Would Marius desire or approve this neglect of duty for his sake? No; he would tell me to be happy myself, and to be cheerful with others, and to trust him in all things. I—will—do—it."

She said the words slowly, and sat still a mo-

ment to realize her own promise. And when she rose and lifted the work which she had flung down with such discouragement, she was a different woman. There was a smile upon her face; she had turned it to the east.

She did not continue her sewing. "I will go out," she said. "If events will not come to me, I will at least give them an opportunity to meet me on the street." She dressed rapidly, and resolved to take the broad sidewalk down Broadway. As she passed the parlor she peeped in with a smiling face, and said, "Father, I am going for a walk."

"Have the carriage, Virginia, and drive. You will get your feet wet."

"I would rather walk. I want to be in motion. I want to touch people, and to feel the crowd."

"Very well. I do not pretend to understand women, or anything they do; though I have lived with them more than sixty years."

He felt the laugh, with which she answered this sally, to be refreshing. It had its old sympathetic, good-natured ring. It inspired him to movement also. He remembered that Harpers had just sent him "The Pilgrims of the Rhine," and there was an occult flavor in Bulwer's novels which piqued his own leaning to the supernatural. He rose for the book, and stood a few moments at the Broadway window

to watch Virginia out of sight and catch her last backward smile.

It was scarcely noon then, and the short winter day was nearly over when she returned. She went at once to the parlor, throwing off, as she entered, the heavy velvet cloak she wore. Her lovely face looked out of her large bonnet like a flower out of its cup; she untied its strings, and with it in her hand stopped and kissed her father, who was lying at ease in his large chair, his face expressing nothing but serenity and satisfaction.

"I have been visiting, father. I walked as far as Atwell's music store, to see what new songs he had; and as I passed Park Place, Margaret Hone was at her window, and saw me. She asked me to come in and take lunch with them, and hear all about Mr. Ray's party."

"Was it indeed such a fine affair?"

"The finest ever given in New York. The house, Margaret says, is grand enough for a duke. The ceilings are all exquisitely painted; the moldings are gilded; the ottomans and curtains of the richest satin; and the mirrors and other decorations splendid beyond description. Margaret also says that the dancing and the supper equaled anything they saw either in London or Paris."

"New York is doing pretty well. I am sorry we did not go, Virginia—if you regret it."

"Oh, no, father! How could I have found any joy in dancing and making merry when I knew you were anxious? And it would not have been right to spend money unnecessarily, when you are losing it so unexpectedly and so unavoidably; and, as Mr. Hone thinks, so unjustly."

"Mr. Hone has himself lost largely."

"Yes, and he is very angry at President Jackson. He spoke with great feeling about the suffering of the New York merchants. The pressure is daily increasing. Father, what is to be done? He says Boston & Providence railroad stock sold to-day at eighty-three per cent. It used to sell at one hundred and ninety per cent. And the petition of the New York merchants, though presented to the President by the best men of our city, has totally failed."

"I told them it would fail. I was asked to accompany this petition, and use my private influence with my old General. I answered then, 'There is absolutely no private affection, and no private influence, which can move President Jackson a hair's breadth in any public question.'"

"Mr. Hone told me he had just returned from a meeting at the Exchange. He says the whole street from William Street to a distance below the Exchange was a solid mass of men; they were all in favor of the United

States Bank, and the return of the deposits to it."

"They ought to have been more patriotic. Virginia, whatever men think to-day, while the shoe is pinching them, the time will come when all will acknowledge Jackson's far-seeing policy. I can bear a little loss, because I look beyond myself to my posterity; all good men can do so."

"You must try and go down town to-morrow, father. I imagine, from what Mr. Hone said, there was rather a funny scene with the President."

"I have heard all about it, Virginia. An old friend who was present called to see me this afternoon, and we had a long talk."

"What does he say?"

"That opposition to Jackson is quite useless; for he is as determined in 1834 to crumble the Bank to pieces as he was in 1815 to drive the British army into the sea. He says the United States is a great country, but not great enough for two Presidents like Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle—and Nicholas Biddle will have to resign."

"Mr. Hone said the petition contained six thousand of the best names in New York."

"Most of them obtained with the Bank's money."

"And it was presented by a deputation of bankers and merchants."

"Of course; they represented their own interests."

"They ought at least to have commanded the President's respectful attention. Mr. Hone says he simply flew into a passion. I suppose you know what Andrew Jackson's passions are."

"I know nothing wrong of Andrew Jackson. I will tell you just what happened. When the deputation entered the President's presence, he was writing and smoking. Imagine now his long pipe resting on the table, and the immense steel pen he uses rushing over the paper in a vain effort to emulate or express the fiery soul behind it. As the deputation entered, he pushed back his paper, rose and said:

"'Now gentleman, what is your pleasure with me?'

"Then Mr. King began to explain, in his deliberate, dignified manner, but before he had uttered many sentences, the President cut short his speech——

"'Insolvent!' he cried, taking up Mr. King's word. 'Insolvent,' you say. Well, gentlemen, what do you come to me for? Go to Nicholas Biddle. We have no money here, gentlemen. Biddle has all the money. He has millions in specie in his vaults, lying idle, and you come to me to save you from breaking? Go to Biddle.'

"Some one said something about restoring the deposits, and he replied with anger:

"'I have said it before, and I say it again, I will never restore the deposits. I will never recharter the United States Bank. I will never sign a charter for any bank, so long as my name is Andrew Jackson.'

"I can imagine how he said this, Virginia, and it called to my remembrance names that the Indians gave him in his youth—*Sharp Knife* and *Pointed Arrow;* though it is long, long years since I have heard them."

"No one doubts that Jackson was a great general, but——"

He was a great general because he is a great man. And he looks it yet, in spite of his years. I have seen him standing among foreign Ministers in gold lace and jeweled orders, surrounded by officers in splendid uniforms; only a tall, spare man in a black suit, without a single decoration, and he looked king of men for all that."

"How do you account for his great personal influence?"

"He has great personal dignity—a kind of game-cock look which I never saw in any other man. His blue eyes shoot forth lightning; his large features are written all over by a soul on fire. His manner is frank and easy, though commanding: yet his white hair, brushed straight up from his brow, gives his long, beardless face when in repose, a delicate, an almost womanly look. If you saw him but a

moment, Virginia, you would say 'that is a great man,' and you would never forget him."

"All women seem to idolize him."

"Because wherever a woman is concerned, he is a perfect Don Quixote. I believe he would champion the poorest woman in the land, if she was wounded by the tongue of slander, or crushed by the touch of any sorrow. He had a good mother and a good wife, and all women are sacred to him. So stern and yet so gentle, his nature reminds me of the great bow of Ulysses; its strength makes all other strengths seem weakness, yet it responds to the lightest touch,

> "'And in a low tone beautifully it sang,
> Voiced like a swallow.'"

"I begin to love Andrew Jackson, though some one told me he was very careless about his dress—a cardinal sin in a public man."

"Some one wronged him. His linen slightly ruffled, is always white and fine; and his plain black suit well made, and without a spot. He carries his tasseled cane as if it were a sword; and his high white beaver hat, with its black widower's band, is planted firmly on his head. Dressed like an ordinary gentleman, yet if you met him in a congress of crowned emperors, you would say 'he is the greatest of all.'"

"Still, father, he has made so much trouble."

"He has not made the trouble. Any other

man being President at this time would have had the same question to settle; and no other man would have grappled with it as well. Consider a moment, and you will see that his treatment of the Bank question is only in accord with his treatment of one equally important, the attempted secession of South Carolina about the time we went to Europe."

"I remember. The word was then *nullification.* One heard nothing else; it flavored speech as the word 'deposits' does now. I was sick to death of it."

"Yet on that word hung the preservation of our glorious Republic. If Calhoun, or some others, had been President, we should have had civil war, or a broken, dismembered Union. But Jackson understood the people and the question. I was in Washington when it first came up; and he said then: 'South Carolina wants her own will, and her own way; and she means rebellion, no matter what word she calls. To-day it is the tariff; give her her own tariff, and to-morrow she will cry—slavery. She means "Independence." She means to break the Union; and she shall not do it while Andrew Jackson is President.'"

"That was a question worth fighting about."

"It was a question that required a man like Jackson to answer it. But all history shows us that when the hour for great events strikes,

up rises the man able to control them. Jackson was ready, he was only waiting for the signal. He answered South Carolina's defiance with the same frightful energy which had once controlled the lawless men of the Tennessee frontier; which had quelled mutiny in the army, and terrified the discontented citizens of New Orleans into sympathy, or neutrality. While the militia of Charleston were gasconading in blue cockades and palmetto buttons, Jackson had sent General Scott with troops to the seditious city, and a war sloop had anchored in her harbor, to protect the officers of the Government in their duty. He stamped out Nullification in South Carolina as if it had been the rattlesnake on her State flag; as he will stamp out any attempt to turn this free republic into a mere financial autocracy. For my part, if I lose every dollar I possess, I will remember the generations to come, and still say, Thank God for Andrew Jackson!"

He had risen as he spoke, and as he closed the sentence his fine, pale face was lit up by the glowing soul behind it, and his eyes had in them a light prophetic and triumphant. Virginia put her arm around his neck and kissed him. And just then the dinner bell rang; and so, smiling a little at this prosaic ending to their lofty mood, Virginia took her father's arm, and he led her to her seat in the dining-room.

Nelly was standing behind her chair; she was quite silent, but yet in some way she contrived to infuse into all her actions a sense of her respect and kindness and perfect satisfaction with her surroundings. Both father and daughter enjoyed the feeling, without analyzing it. They eat their meal cheerfully, talking of Mr. Ray's party and other local matters flowing from this topic.

Suddenly Virginia said, "There is to be a meeting in Chatham Street Chapel about the exiled Poles. Such a lot of them as I saw about the Park—handsome, miserable-looking men. Will you go, father?"

"I cannot afford to help them, Virginia; and it does not please me to see so many foreigners in New York. I think they will make the next attempt to rule us. What do you say to the opera to-night? We are promised some wonderful Zingari music."

"I should like to go very much; our box is already paid for, and we ought to occupy it sometimes."

"Then make yourself handsome, and we will go. Suppose you wear that pink silk and ermine cloak again. I have not seen them since Jane's marriage, and I thought them very becoming."

They were a little late; the performance had begun when they entered. A band of gypsies were on the stage, and Virginia felt herself tin-

gling all over to the poignant sounds of their guitars, working in magic combinations with the beating cymbals, and the dulcimers whipped by the dusky fingers. The music stirred and fretted her, as fire frets an inch from dry wood. It seemed to tease, to challenge, to tell her something she could not grasp.

She had often been in this first American Opera House, but had never got over her sensation of pleasure in its splendor. As she removed her cloak her eyes wandered over the tier of boxes painted in superb classical designs; over the gilded panels, over the luxurious sofas, and the hangings and upholstery of richest satins. The music, the lights, the crowd touched her at all points of her being; she smiled with delight; she was conscious of a keener and kinder sense of life.

Their box was within sight of that owned by Mr. Cruger, and she was glad to see that he was not present. "If he were there, I am sure he would walk over with some bad news in the interval; he always does." As this thought crossed her mind two ladies and an elderly gentleman entered it. Virginia did not know them, and she did not even speculate about their identity. The face she feared to see in that box was happily absent; and it was momentarily getting too late for its appearance. She had forgotten Mr. Cruger, when she was conscious of a slight stir in the dreaded direc-

tion. Her eyes were instantly fixed upon the door. Two gentlemen entered; one was Mr. Rhea, and the other was Marius Bradford.

A lovely blush instantly covered her white shoulders, her slender throat, her pale cheeks and brow. Her face grew luminous. Her eyes shone like stars. A kind of radiance quite perceptible to a lover's vision surrounded her. Recognition was instantaneous. The flash from the eyes of Marius met the flash from the eyes of Virginia half way. He could not, for a moment, seat himself. He was struck motionless and dumb by her beauty and sympathy, though he did not know it was sympathy, and would have feared to hope so far.

From that moment the opera was over to Virginia. She sat still, looking, not at the stage, but at the mental vision behind the curtains of her eyes. At the next interval she spoke to the Major, and, with a slight reluctance, he went to Mr. Cruger's box and greeted the Captain. She had not said, "Bring the gentleman here to see me"; she trusted to the influence which Marius usually exercised, and she was not wrong. In a few moments she perceived they were coming to her; and she rose with smiles and trembling joy to meet them.

Marius was completely under the spell of his great love. He could not utter a word when she laid her hand in his; but to a woman so

sensitive as Virginia, words were only a clumsy interpretation of a sweet and subtle language. In a glance, swift as light, unavoidable as the beating of his heart, Marius, when he took her hand, told the whole sweet story.

Fortunately, the music, the singing, the necessity for general remark, made a screen behind which love revealed itself in ways hidden and occult to all but the initiated. Marius sat beside Virginia; he never could tell how this arrangement had been managed. Jack sat opposite to her, and the Major spoke to him, when speech was permissible, with great apparent favor. Then Miss Mason also added a word or a smile or some slight movement of understanding. And Jack was perfectly happy. He knew so little of a woman like Virginia that he believed her most obvious favors to be her sweetest and most worthy ones.

She appeared to say little to Marius, but he was supremely blessed in that little. For when she turned her face with the simplest question to him, he felt the few words to be a cypher, whose meaning was beyond words. She lifted her eyes in the most casual way, and his very soul leaped into his eyes to meet her glance. And in that reciprocal flash both felt all lingual sounds to be an intrusion, blundering and impertinent, falling far behind the clear glory of a smile or glance.

To at least three of the audience the opera that night was exceedingly short. "Fanti must have missed an act," Virginia said, with a laugh, and then she turned for her cloak. Marius had it in his hand, and she was delighted at his readiness to seize an opportunity. As he assisted her to clasp it, she said:

"This is the dress for which you bought the silk."

"It is the loveliest dress that woman ever wore."

"No one has yet thanked you for your part in it."

"Oh! you know there is no question of thanks."

"Why did not you bring it to me as you promised?"

"I—could not."

"You disappointed me."

"God knows I would not willingly do that; I——"

He was on the point of saying, "I love you too well." With a conscious shiver he restrained the words. But Virginia knew they had been on his lips, and she looked a moment at the bearded portals that shut them in. There was some reproach in the look, though she was not conscious of it, but Marius felt its pang.

They had lingered a little, willingly enough

hindered by the crowd, and when they reached the door, the Major's carriage had been called, and he was just entering it. Jack stood bareheaded at the door to assist Virginia, and she gently drew her hand from the arm of Marius, and put it into Jack's hand. He took it with a few merry words, and she answered them as merrily. Then the Major leaned forward, and said:

"Good-night, Captain. Let us have the pleasure of seeing you again. Come to dinner to-morrow."

"I will. Good-night."

The carriage began to move ere the pleasant words of farewell were all spoken; but as it did so, Marius saw the vision of a lovely face bending toward him, and heard amid the clash and outcry one eager word—"to-morrow."

CHAPTER IX.

MR. AND MRS. FORFAR.

"There is nothing new under the sun;
There is no new hope or despair;
The agony just begun
Is as old as the earth and the air.
My secret soul of bliss
Is one with the singing stars,
And the ancient mountains miss
No hurt that my being mars."

"Time goes by turns, and chances change by course."

"Thine, too, the part
To prove, that still for him the laurels grow
Who reaches through the mind to pluck the heart."

VIRGINIA talked all the way home. She was under an excitement which in its first phase found a relief in speech. But her father was silent, unconsciously antedating the anxieties of the coming day. The meeting with Captain Bradford did not appear to him as a matter of any importance. He forgot it as soon as the man was out of his sight.

Virginia found a far more sympathetic atmosphere when she reached her room. Nelly had voluntarily assumed the duties of a lady's maid, and was sitting there before a bright fire crimping the ruffles of Virginia's night-gown with a small penknife. She lifted her

pleasant face as Virginia entered, and immediately rose to meet her.

"Eh, Miss! You do look well. You must hev been heving a good time."

"I have had a very happy evening, Nelly. Is it late?"

"Going up hill for twelve o'clock, Miss; but I'm neither tired nor sleepy."

She busied herself in removing Virginia's pretty cloak and dress; she brought her chamber gown, and loosened her hair, and then produced a tray holding a plate of cold prairie hen, a raspberry jam tartlet, and a pitcher of milk.

"I think a deal of a bit of good eating, Miss. If you hev hed a merry time you need it; and if you hevn't hed a merry time I'm sure you need it a long sight more."

"It is just what I wanted, Nelly. And it is nice to have some one watch for me, and care for me." Then she looked suddenly into Nelly's face, and said, "Did you know the 'Arethusa' was in port?"

"To be sure, Miss. She hes been here since the beginning of the week. I saw Captain Bradford passing last Monday night."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Not I. It was ten o'clock at night. I was building up this fire, and going to draw the blind, and I saw him pass on t' opposite side of the street."

"Nelly, if you do not mind telling me, I should like to know all about your acquaintance with Captain Bradford."

"There's nothing to hide, Miss. I came over in his ship, and I hedn't a shilling when I hed paid my right there. I took a cold the second day out, and hed a bad inflammation on my lungs. And there wasn't any doctor on board, and nobody who cared aught for me, whether I lived or died; nob-but a little lass that went and told t' Captain. My word! he made a change, quick. He hed me taken to a good bed, and he saw all done that ought to be done, and he hired two decent women who were on board to watch me, turn about night and day. When I began to mend he gave me good food, and that wasn't all. He asked me about mysen, and what I was going to do, and he made me take two sovereigns when I left t' ship, so that I needn't be worrited out of my head again."

"Mrs. Forfar told me you used to go often to see him."

"I did until he told me I hed better stay away from the 'Arethusa.'"

"Why, Nelly?"

"Varry kindly he said it, Miss; and there was a kinder meaning still in his heart. I wasn't knowing much, right out of a Yorkshire spinning village."

"He wrote to you, though?"

"Aye, he did. It was about John Thomas Clitheroe—that is my young man—a deal of bother he hes given me—but they all do."

"You mean your lover, Nelly?"

"To be sure. I promised to wed John Thomas—he's a Whitby lad, and a ship-carpenter; but he went to China on the 'Water Witch,' and I heard naught from him, and the lasses were joking me, saying he hed run away from me, and such like. So I came to America, for I told mysen many a time, and times again, now if John Thomas Clitheroe wants me, he can come after me."

"And Captain Bradford was writing to you about John Thomas?"

"He thought I hed better let him know where I was, and he hes been looking after t' lad for me. Last Tuesday morning he sent me word he hed found him out, and hed written a letter to him, saying he would be glad to hev him on the 'Arethusa.'"

"You must be very happy?"

"Well, Miss, I am. It is worrity work thinking about a lad away off in China, or maybe in a worse place. But if John Thomas gets under Captain Bradford, he'll hev as easy a road to t' grave as a workingman can hev."

"You think a great deal of Captain Bradford, Nelly?"

"I'd be a poor sort of a lass if I didn't."

"Mrs. Forfar believed—that—perhaps——"

"I know well enough what Mrs. Forfar be lieved. She hed a young man on her own mind then, and she thought every other lass was in t' same fix. She hes her young man now, and I doan't mind saying he is a downright blackguard."

"Nelly, you should not use such strong words."

"I think them, Miss, and what is in comes out. That's the Yorkshire way."

"I always felt sure that Captain Bradford would never talk foolishness to a pretty girl whom he had helped."

"He would bite his tongue out first. He would that."

"Nor even look it, Nelly?"

"He's a bit above such ways. He'd no more look a lie than he'd speak one."

"He was at the opera to-night, Nelly. I think he is a very noble looking man."

"Well, Miss, they would be hard set that tried to match him anywhere. I don't know as ever I saw a grander-looking man in all my life."

"He had a very rough passage this time."

"I wonder if he knows t' best way to drive his ship. I always thought he took her over t' roughest bit of water he could find."

"Do you know Mr. Rhea? He seems a great deal with the Captain."

"Well, I'm sure I can't say if I know him.

Is he a good-looking young man, who carries himsen as if he thought New York was a deal better for heving him in it?"

"I dare say he may feel that way, Nelly. He looks like Captain Bradford."

"Happen he is some relation. He never called him aught but Jack, and t' young man seemed to be t' varry light of his countenance."

"Nelly, when John Thomas comes, you must let me know. I suppose you will want to be married."

"When we hev saved a bit of brass to put a roof over our heads. He'll hev got that much sense anyway by this time, I do hope. When he knew me first, he were in a craze to be married—what fool isn't?"

"How did you feel about it then, Nelly?"

"I were in t' same box. How we were to live didn't come into our heads; as it might hev done if we hed hed a bit of knowledge of 'rithmetic, and could hev reckoned things up a bit. Anyway, we fell out one Sunday evening, and John Thomas went to China, and I came to New York."

"But now all will be right again?"

"Happen so and happen not. If Fate parted us, Captain Bradford will find himsen bested in all his plans. Nobody is any match for what *hes to be*."

"We must always hope for what we wish,

Nelly; that is always right. I think now I will go to sleep." She rose with the words, and Nelly carried away the tray, and left her alone with her own sweet thoughts.

Then Virginia snuffed out the candles. The burning wood made a light most consonant to her dreamy, loitering mood; and she sat in her white gown before it till the room began to chill, and the snowy bed was rosy in the glow of the embers. Then she sank upon it smiling; her fair still face growing whiter and whiter as the fire died out and the light of the waning moon came stealing in through the window. It threw across the white bed and the white sleeper a light mournful and mysterious, and gave to the room an air of austere solitude and of a life apart.

Wonderful as the night had been to Virginia, it was more so to Marius. He endured Jack's company, his transports and illusions, to the very last moment, with a forced interest and equanimity; but, oh, how glad he was to find himself alone! "At last!" he said, with a great sigh, and he turned with rapid steps toward Broadway. He felt that he could not sleep until he had seen the house in which she dwelt; a longing most natural, for love, as well as religion, has its shrines and its pilgrimages. The home of the beloved one is as precious and sacred to the lover as the shrine of his saint is to the devotee.

He was tossed on the waves of a great conflict. He felt as if in this matter both Fate and Jack had been cruel to him. If he accepted the Major's invitation to dinner, he felt that he must be a traitor to his brother. "I have no power to resist her charm," he said pitifully, wringing his strong hands. "In her presence, I cannot force myself to even wish to resist it. What shall I do?"

He could come to no decision. The cold, wintry day broke and found him still sitting in the saloon of his ship. He shivered when he saw it first brightening the seaward port. Not till then had he known that it was cold. The cook was in the galley; he asked for a cup of coffee, drank it, and lay down. He had worn out his capacity both for thought and feeling, and he fell into a profound sleep.

Our first thoughts on waking have often a remnant of the prophesying night, and are well worth notice. The first thought Marius had was, "She loves me! I saw it in her eyes. I felt it in the touch of her hand. Oh, joy! She loves me!" His second thought drove the first out-of-doors. It was Jack, and Jack's rights. He almost felt resentment at the very word "rights." He had loved her first. He loved her as Jack was incapable of loving. Yes—but he had promised himself to give Jack a chance. His heart then tried to reason conscience away. What if Virginia

loved him? Was it not cruel to make her suffer for Jack's chance and his own idea of brotherly honor? For a good man knows the value of a true love; he dares not hazard it; he will not squander it; he fears to try it too far. And yet? Perhaps he was flattering himself. His face was stern as he mused—stern and sad; for there is a gloom in deep love as in deep water; a silence in it which suspends both the tongue and the foot.

He went on deck and saw the winter morning—in yellow and white—brightening the river. The wind was most unusually favorable for his outward voyage; he wondered if there was any reason for delay. It seemed easier to give way to Jack when he was out at sea, out of hearing and sight of his enthusiasms. He was afraid of getting angry at his brother—of learning to dislike him. The thought made him shudder. He walked quickly forward, and began to investigate the condition of the ship for sailing.

About the middle of the morning, one of the agents for the line came on board, and he asked him if there was any cause for delay.

"None at all. The cargo is in. We have only two passengers; a young man at the office, and a traveler waiting at the hotel. You can sail with the next tide, if you wish, Captain. I will have the passengers and the papers here."

It seemed the best solution of the difficulty. He had proposed it in one of those moods in which men leave to the turning up of a penny, the drawing of a card, the accident of a verse, or the answer to a question, the decision they are not themselves able to reach.

He accepted the decision, but he had both regret and sorrow in it; he accepted it, though rebellion against it was in his heart. At the noon hour Jack called. He came forward with a gloomy face. "Marius," he said, "I am as miserable as I can be. I do not know what I am doing."

"What is the matter, Jack?"

"Why did she not ask me to dinner, as well as you?"

"Perhaps she thought she owed me a little courtesy for the silk. But it was not her who asked me, it was the Major. Some people are cut on too small a pattern to take a favor."

"I wish you were not going, Marius. When I think of last night, I am sure Virginia paid you a great deal of attention."

"I am not going."

"Not going to Major Mason's to-night! What will Virginia think?"

"If I was you, Jack, I would speak of her as Miss Mason; she has not yet given you the right to use—the other name. I shall lift my anchor this afternoon at fifteen minutes to five, and go out to sea with the tide."

"Marius!"

"Jack!"

"Will you not send a note explaining your absence?"

"Suppose you carry it for me. I do not like to let any man go ashore on the last day."

"I shall be glad to carry it. Write the note, Marius, and I will go there at once."

"Try and get back before I sail."

There was a heart full of pathos in the request, but Jack was not sensitive to it. He took the note and hurried up Broadway with it. This time Nelly answered his knock. She said Miss Mason was at home, and took him into the familiar parlor. After she had told Virginia of his presence, she returned and added fuel to the fire, and drew the blinds to the pleasantest angle. Jack wondered at her beautiful face, her magnificent coloring, and her pretty figure, and did not feel the time long until Virginia entered.

She met her visitor with smiles, and took the letter. "It is directed to my father," she said; "are you to wait for an answer? Is it from Mr. Cruger?"

"Oh no! My brother sent me with it, because he wished me to explain——"

"Your brother?"

"Marius. Captain Bradford."

She had stood hitherto. She now sat down,

and requested Jack also to be seated. "Is Captain Bradford your brother?"

"We had the same mother, Miss Mason."

"Yes? What are you to explain? Cannot Captain Bradford dine with us to-night?"

"He is compelled to sail this afternoon. He said I was to tell you this. He is very much disappointed."

"And you are his brother? Mr. Rhea, how proud you must be of him!"

"I am. There is nobody like Marius Bradford in the whole world. Why, he has been both father and brother to me." And then, led on by Virginia's sympathy and questions, he told her the full story of the captain's self-denying life. He told it well. Nature had given him eloquence, love taught him how to breathe into the words a living soul. Jack talked till both were in tears and smiles; till all barriers of social caste and form were broken down, and they sat together like brother and sister.

"But I must hurry back to him now," he said, rising as the clock struck three. "He asked me to try and see him before he sailed."

"Wait a few minutes. I will answer for my father." She went to the desk and wrote:

To Captain Marius Bradford:

We regret very much your absence to-night, but understand how Captain Bradford must always prefer duty to pleasure. A good voyage to the "Arethusa," and our best wishes for her Captain.

VIRGINIA MASON.

She folded the letter as letters were then folded, and sealed it with a small circle of blue wax. Then, going into the greenhouse, which opened from this parlor, she gathered hastily a lavish nosegay of scented geranium and white hyacinths, and said:

"Hasten now, Mr. Rhea, or you will miss your brother; and I particularly wish him to have the note and the flowers."

As Jack left her presence, Nelly entered with a letter. It was from Mrs. Forfar, and Virginia was delighted to see that it covered many pages. It was the first long letter she had received, and it was evidently written in an extremely enthusiastic mood. Virginia was ready to believe every word of it, but Major Mason made a few allowances. "Letters are never quite truthful," he said; "they reflect only the passing feeling; they say too much, or too little."

In reality the Major had been sensitive to an overestimate of satisfaction in Jane's letter; he was inclined to fear it was probably the accentuated reverse of some condition exactly opposite. Nor was he wrong. Many shadows had already gathered on the horizon of Jane's new life; but these as yet were alternated by frequent intervals of sunshine; and in one of these bright periods she had been led into that exaggeration of her surroundings which is the temptation of letter-writing.

Her honeymoon voyage to New Orleans had been all her fancy painted it. On the packet they were dependent upon each other's society, for they felt themselves to be far removed from their prosaic companions, and were rather proud of their isolation. But at New Orleans they reached changed conditions. Here Nigel Forfar was at home. He was continually meeting in the hotel, or on Canal Street, some neighbor who was in "Orleans" to buy slaves or to sell cotton. The bar of the hotel was his favorite resort, and there he gathered round him a continually changing crowd, eager to hear what was going on at the "No'th" about the all-important Abolition question.

Now Jane also began to realize that she had come almost into a new world. The city itself was so unlike New York; she was constantly raking among the ashes of her dreams for memories which haunted her of its queer houses, with their mysterious gardens; of that thick murmur of the river; of the tattered banners of the Spanish moss hanging everywhere. And when Nigel was not by her side, she was almost terrified by the strange mixture of humanity before her: the long, swarthy, indolent men, with their suave manners and soft, slurring speech; the stately black women, coifed in many-colored turbans; the veiled nuns and hooded monks; the lovely

creoles, with their dreamy eyes and warm white faces. She felt like a stranger in a foreign land among them, and her usual self-assertion deserted her.

For the ladies of her own rank—the wives and daughters of the interior planters—looked at her with cool curiosity or disapproving suspicion. If she went into the public parlor of the hotel she could not avoid feeling it. She was from the "No'th," and had she been a white bird in a colony of blackbirds she could not have been made more sensitive to her lack of proper coloring. The tall, languid women, with thick bands of black hair framing cream-white faces, and large eyes, black as night, regarded her rosy cheeks and fair hair and blue eyes as almost improper. Her alert manner, her quick intelligence, her style of dress, her form of speech were all peculiar; and, therefore, very likely wrong. The blackbirds whispered suspiciously together about the strange white bird, and the whisper built a wall of separation which Jane could not surmount.

Nigel was particularly sensitive to this social disapproval. He had that small nature which sees through the eyes of others. He began to have hours in which he despised the beauty which could not assert itself. He knew the ladies of his acquaintance were wondering at his choice, and he felt himself doubtful of it.

He knew, when Mrs. Latrobe or Mrs. Fontaine turned their great black eyes on his face, with ineffable languors in them, that they were pitying him; and at such moments he pitied himself.

Jane was aware of all the inter-drama. One evening a large company was gathered in the hotel parlor. Nigel sat by the sofa on which the lovely bride of Señor Henrique reclined. The dusky white of her shoulders and arms was thrown into fine relief by a dress of dark sapphire satin. A turban of softest tulle shaded her pale face, and crowned with its transparent film the thick rippling bands of her black hair. Jane saw with indignation her fine eyes flash and fall for the benefit of Nigel. Heartsick with a sense of her loneliness, passionately resentful at the injustice and unkindness which was wrecking her love and life, she walked almost unconsciously to the piano, and touched softly a few notes.

"Will Mrs. Fo'fah play for us?" said the Señora, with covert sarcasm. She was quite sure that Jane would be dashed by the very suggestion. On the contrary, Jane saw in the white keys a medium for the tumultuous feelings which surcharged her heart. Without regarding the invitation, simply obeying some interior urgent demand, she sat down before the instrument, and in a moment her fingers were flying over the keys, and her clear voice

was thrilling every atom of the heavy atmosphere :

> He who has drunk of Love's sharp wine
> Will drink thereof till death.

Strength makes joy, and Jane had suddenly found out her strength. The agony of a moment had revealed to her a latent power—nothing she had ever learned, something she *remembered.* It was marvelous. The song, fresh and clear, had a lark's vivid, ardent, velvety notes, and a recall soft and flute-like as a wren's; a soulful voice, that seemed to gravitate above. She was amazed at her own power. She went on exercising it for the pure joy it gave her; indifferent as to its effect upon others; only realizing with a kind of wonder that it answered every increasing demand upon it.

When she ceased, she found that she had drawn from every part of the hotel a delighted audience. The room was filled; it had filled without a word or a sound. Old and young were standing with charmed senses around her, and Nigel's gleaming eyes were fixed with wonder and love upon her face—Nigel, who had always declared that he disliked music, but who had found out through the appreciation of others the wonder of his wife's voice.

Jane hardly heard the murmurs of delight that thanked her. A sudden inspiration had taken possession of her. She would show

these men and women that there was a beauty in womanhood far beyond the sensuous captivation of mere form or color. A number of fine verses had just been written by two young men called Bryant and Whittier. Jane knew them. From her lips they sprang, instinct with the soul-fire in which they had their birth. They were not all in exact sympathy with Southern sentiment, but they went to the truest depth of every heart. Jane was transfigured as she interpreted them; she had a triumph that carried all before it—even her husband's nervous fear of a social blunder. Nobody asked *why* she had done this thing; the power to do it was felt to be sufficient warranty for its exercise.

Never had Nigel been so proud of his wife as when he gave her his arm that night. It was well that it was the closing act of their stay in New Orleans, for Fortune seldom answers an *encore*. Jane left with all her honor unfaded; a memory that men carried to lonely plantations, a voice full of noble message that echoed more or less clearly in many a heart for many a year.

Her voyage up the Mississippi to Memphis was a kind of overture to her new life. It filled her with a strange sadness. The drinking and gambling, the oaths and quarreling, the popping of champagne corks, the gurgle of liquors, were not kept out of the ladies' apart-

ment by the slight partition supposed to exclude them. If she went on deck, her eyes fell upon the gangs of slaves going from the New Orleans slave market to till the tobacco and cotton lands of the Upper Country. To hear of slavery is one thing; to see it is another. Looking into the unutterable sadness and gloom of the black faces beneath her gaze, there were moments when Jane wanted to shriek aloud; when she vowed to herself that she would have neither part nor lot in such iniquity; when she hated herself for letting her love blind her to the real position she was to occupy—a mistress and owner of slaves.

They landed at Memphis late in the afternoon. It had been raining all day, but the rain had changed to fog; a thick, clammy fog, viscous to the touch. Up the muddy banks the straining mules pulled with great difficulty the carriage awaiting them; and Jane looked curiously at the town perched upon the high bluff of the river. The business of the day was over, and it had an indolent and impassive air. Few white men were in sight, and no white women. Negroes, mules, and wagons had the wide streets to themselves. They drove so rapidly through them that Jane had only a confused vision of red brick stores and white houses in dim inclosed gardens. Everywhere there were large willow trees, every-

where peacocks calling with harsh ill-nature into the misty night; everywhere a lonely sense of lives that shut themselves each in their own tenement.

The Forfar place was a few miles out of Memphis. They approached it in silence, for Jane had a stubborn depression of spirit that would not be reasoned with. She felt indifferent as to whether Nigel liked it or not. The house stood at the head of a long avenue, gray and spectral-looking in the grayness of the foggy nightfall. A white man met them at the door,—a slow, melancholy creature, with a mouth full of tobacco. Nigel introduced him to Jane as "Mr. Clay," and he walked into the house with them. The wide hall was full of servants. They smiled and courtesied, and looked with gentle kindness at the young white woman who had come to rule them. Nigel spoke to one or two, and ordered supper in a voice that struck Jane as an entirely new one.

But she was too weary to speculate. She ate a little supper, and was then taken to a large, bare apartment, with curtainless windows. "You shall furnish it as you desire, Jane," said Nigel kindly. "Are you not glad to be at home, dear?"

That was sufficient. Yes, she was glad, and she told him so with kisses and pleasant hopes and words.

The next morning was a lovely one, and they went through the house together, and Nigel made a note of what was required for every room. Then he took her to the stables and the offices, and showed her a little negro village of snow-white cabins set between rows of live oaks. And everywhere there was the same order and silence, the same respect from passing servants, the same scrupulous cleanliness and methodical care.

"It is the best-kept plantation in Tennessee," said Nigel proudly. "Clay is an excellent overseer; no idleness and no grumbling here. Look at those cottages, Jane! could anything be cleaner or prettier? Let abolitionists give the free negroes at the North homes as good, before they say another word." Then he drew her hand through his arm, and spoke sweetly to her. "We shall be very happy, Jane, my dear wife, shall we not?"

"I need nothing but you, Nigel, to make me happy."

They were on the threshold when she said so, and he answered her with a kiss. And it was with this kiss upon her lips that Jane wrote to Virginia that long letter so full of hopes and pleasant exaggerations—a letter which she wondered at in after days, and re-read with mingled anger and mockery.

And she thought as she wrote it that Vir-

ginia had passed out of her life—that their friendship was a broken thread time would hardly tie again. But she soon learnt the lesson all learn sooner or later, that few things in life break off absolutely, and that there is often a tremendous vitality in what may be called *Sequences.*

CHAPTER X.

A FAMOUS ELECTION.

"For the masses live in obedience to passion, pursuing their own pleasures and the means of gratifying them; but of what is honorable and really delightful they have not the slightest idea, inasmuch as they never had a taste of them. What power of reasoning, then, could bring about a change on such men as these? For it is not possible, or at least not easy, to change what has been impressed for a long time upon the moral character."

"It is passion that brings ruin on rulers, even though they be the very best of men; wherefore the law is reason free from passion."

CITIES have their heroic periods, and though New York in A. D. 1834 was restless and riotous, its true citizens were moved by noble and patriotic impulses. Most of them had heard from their fathers' or their grandfathers' lips actual incidents of the fight for liberty; and the sword or rifle which had assisted in its achievement hung yet over the hearthstone of their childhood's home, and had an affectionate place in their memory. Their loyalty to their native land had still a strong anti-British flavor. They believed in their own opinions and their own handiwork, and were

even ideal and sentimental; easily moved by a song or a speech which appealed to their national or their domestic feelings.

Up to this date, also, men were made honorable by civic service. The mayoralty was in the gift of the Governor and the Council, and had always been awarded to some man whose probity and worth were conspicuous. The office of alderman was also a position implying not only personal worth but public respect, an occasion for wise and loyal service, and not an opportunity for the making of money.

But in 1834 the people of New York, for the first time, elected their Mayor; and the election introduced into civic honors the element of politics. It was an unfortunate time for any innovation. The city's commerce was still prostrate, the quarrel between the President and the Bank being at its height, and the election of Mayor was to be the test of New York's approval or disapproval of the President's course. And, singular as it may appear to-day, there was then a most imposing number of wealthy business men who stood by the President regardless of their personal interest in the matter—men such as Jesse Hoyt, or John R. Livingston, who, at a great public meeting, declared the Bank question to be, "not whether their business was doing well or verging to bankruptcy, but whether the government established by their patriot fathers

was to be continued, or the nation was to be controlled by a moneyed aristocracy."

Had this question come up for decision between two parties of native-born Americans only, it would have been determined with that calm dignity which is made possible to all by the ballot-box. But New York, with an insane generosity and a prodigal trust in the very atmosphere of freedom to reform and inform men, had not only given shelter to all the paupers and criminals who chose to come to her for refuge, but had also given them the right to make her laws and elect her rulers.

The greater part of her foreign element—which was very large—was composed of Irish peasants, who could neither read nor write, and who knew nothing whatever of civil liberty. But they had the overweening self-estimation of the Celtic nature, and its rapacious greed; they were equally sure of their natural ability to take a share in the government, and to sell that share of the privilege for some tangible return in the currency. This party, impudent and avaricious, were easily caught by the cries of the Jackson party: "Gold and silver money, and not notes with pictures on them and promises to pay"; "Jackson, the poor man's friend"; "Jackson against a moneyed aristocracy."

It was evident, weeks before the expected election, that this foreign mob might prove to

be unmanageable. Major Mason vainly pointed out its unreliability, and the disgrace to the Jackson party in condescending to use the votes of such men. But they hung around Tammany Hall, and crowded Nassau and Frankfort Streets, and in their rags and bluster were so evidently in the market that the temptation to buy them was irresistible.

"I have just met Mr. Kane, Virginia," said the Major, one day; "and he declares that one hundred and fifty thousand dollars have been sent on from Washington to buy Irish votes. Of course he said, also, the money had been taken out of the deposits removed from the United States Bank."

"Perhaps it was. What answer did you make?"

"I said, 'Why not surmise five hundred thousand dollars—it is just as easy, Mr. Kane?' and I reminded him that the people who gave Jackson the sword had also given him the purse. That was a little bit of claptrap, Virginia, but he could not or he would not answer it, and so went away with an angry shrug. Well, there will be a great struggle. The anti-Jackson party are encamped in Masonic Hall; and are crying *Verplanck!* The Jackson men are at Tammany Hall, and are crying *Lawrence!*"

"Who is the best man?"

"Lawrence is a great merchant and a good

man. He can look both backward and forward—backward to Washington, and forward to the men and women who are to make the future of the United States. Mr. Verplanck lost his seat in Congress because he would not vote against the Bank. He is a fine scholar and a gentleman, but not a popular man. I think Lawrence will win on his own public merits. I hope he will."

This conversation occurred as Virginia and her father were eating breakfast on the morning of the fourth of April. Virginia's thoughts were on the "Arethusa," for it was near the time of her return; but the excitement was so great that even a maiden dreaming of her lover could not avoid catching the popular enthusiasm.

"Mr. Astor came home yesterday from Havre."

"He will be in time to see the pulling down of the houses between Barclay and Vesey Streets, where he is going to build us such a fine hotel."

"Yes; and in time to vote. Daniel Webster was leaving for Boston as Mr. Astor landed. There were thousands on the wharves near the steamboat cheering and saluting him. I do not approve of Mr. Webster's politics, but if ever a man was godlike in appearance, it is Daniel Webster; and I acknowledge also that mentally he has no peer on this continent."

"Yet he is for the United States Bank, and against the President."

"No man is infallible, Virginia. For my part, I wish the eighth was here; the suspense is becoming exhausting. I understand all business is to cease for the three days' voting."

The eighth came duly in its course. It was a dreadful morning; there was a fierce wind, and the rain fell in blinding torrents. But every one was at fever heat, and unconscious of the tempest; and they stood in the pelting rain in long lines near the poll until twelve o'clock, when the American flag was run up on the Exchange and the voting began.

Major Mason had resolved to vote early and then go home. But he was not able to do so. The crowd, and the spirit of the crowd, took possession of him physically and mentally, and it was late when he returned. Virginia had been miserably anxious for many hours; she had sent the coachman to look for him, and the man had not come back. Then the cook's lover had volunteered his services, and had brought a terrific report of a city in the possession of roughs, and a great civic battle, in which hundreds had been slain.

It was getting dark, and the hoarse murmur of a shouting mob could be distinctly heard. The upper part of the city was deserted by men; only white-faced women watched at an open door or window for the return of those

who had gone into the political fray. Suddenly Nelly cried out:

"Whatever do you think, Miss Virginia? Here comes the master, and with him, of all t' men in this world, Captain Bradford and Mr. Rhea." Nelly had put her pretty head out of the front door on a momentary inspection, and she ran back to Virginia with the good news.

"Does all look right, Nelly?"

"As right as can be, when men are half drowned in pouring rain."

"Nelly, I will run up-stairs a moment and wash my eyes. I must not let the Major see I have been crying. Bring them into the parlor —open the door yourself, Nelly—and then be in a hurry with dinner. I will be down in three minutes."

It really did not take her any longer time to bathe her eyes and face, and put those few touches to her hair and ribbons which seem to impart a distinct air of freshness and order. Yet, when she returned to the parlor, there was no one there but Nelly.

"Have they not come yet, Nelly?"

"Master has gone up-stairs to change his clothes, and much need to, Miss. Such a sight as nobody ever saw! Wet through, and torn, too. Master has been having a time."

"But he is not hurt?"

"Not he, Miss; angry like, but all himsen, as far as I could see."

"The other gentlemen?"

"They wouldn't come in, Miss; and showed their good sense in stepping out. Anybody as wet and muddy hes no business out of t' streets. Miss Virginia, what do you think? John Thomas is here. He came to t' back door, and I let him into t' kitchen, though he is a sight. You see he is all t' way from China."

"You did right, Nelly. Give him a good dinner, and make him as comfortable as you can. How is he?"

"He looks and he talks as if he hed been having a good time. John Thomas is that kind as is never down in t' mouth when there's a fight on hand. He was allays a bit trying thet way. Here is the master coming, Miss."

Major Mason entered with a slight look of injury. "Virginia, my dear, I have been in great danger to-day. You did not meet me when I came in."

"I had been watching many hours for you, father, and very unhappy at your delay. When Nelly saw you coming, I ran up-stairs a moment to prepare for dinner. She said Captain Bradford and Mr. Rhea were with you. I thought perhaps you would ask them to stay."

"I did not ask them to stay. Mr. Rhea thought he would be needed by the committee, and Captain Bradford thought he ought to stay with him in case of another fight."

"Then there has really been fighting?"

"Nelly is ringing the dinner-bell, and I am ready for something to eat. Yes, Virginia, a shameful fight. I voted early, but found myself in a dense crowd, and amid so much excitement I could not get home."

"What time did the voting begin?"

"At twelve o'clock."

"But we heard shouting before that time."

"I dare say. The Whigs had mounted on wheels a really beautiful frigate which they had called the 'Constitution.' She was full-rigged and full-manned, her colors were flying, and she was followed by at least five hundred men dressed like sailors—many of them were sailors. As she passed through Wall Street such a thundering shout broke from the merchants at the Exchange! Such a ninefold thundering shout you never heard, Virginia; and the excited people, quite heedless of the rain, fell into the procession till it swelled to thousands. Every one was singing the same bit of doggerel, but it was wonderfully effective:

"'Stand by the Constitution!
Down with the Jackson reign!
Hurrah for the Bank and the Union!
Verplanck and the Whig campaign!
Hurrah! and Hurrah! and again
Hurrah! and Hurrah! and again
Down with Old Hickory's reign!'

I and others felt that this bit of cleverness was going to ruin a noble cause, and I was

wondering what to do when I saw Captain Bradford and Mr. Rhea standing on the Exchange steps. I went to them. 'What is to be done, Captain?' I said. 'This clever catchpenny is going to ruin us.' Would you like me to get up an opposition frigate?' he asked, all on fire in a moment. Before I could answer, Mr. Livingston said, 'Yes, sir, if it costs ten thousand dollars.' He was off like a flash, and Rhea with him, and in a couple of hours they were back with a rigged boat, flying the Jackson *veto*, and crowded with the men from the 'Arethusa' and other ships in the harbor. The two boats have followed each other all day, and as the Irish surrounded the 'veto' with their shouts and their shillalahs, you may be sure there was a constant running fight on hand. Virginia, I am sorry to say the Jackson party—so honorable and patriotic in itself—has been shamefully disgraced by its partisans this day."

"I am very sorry, too, father. Why do people fight about politics?"

"Because politics include nearly all the subjects which touch men's interests. In most of the Jackson wards it was peaceable enough; but in the Sixth Ward it was hell let loose—oaths and screams and yells and threats of defiance made the poll more like an object on which a mob was wreaking its vengeance than a place for freemen to cast their votes."

"How dreadful! Who were to blame?"

"The men who have given the right of voting to human beings not capable of understanding the glory of self-government. The Irish of the Sixth Ward have one idea of expressing their will—fighting for it; and a great mob of them, armed with clubs and knives, flew, upon some slight provocation, to the Whig assembly-room, and, before anything could be done, left twenty men bleeding on the floor, and literally sacked the place. Those who reached the street were more dead than alive; and the Mayor was unable to send help, his force being all on duty. So the Irish to-night are in possession of a part of the city, and great anxiety is felt."

"How can Christian men be so brutal?"

"My dear, brutality is really very popular. Nothing pleases men half so much as an occasional renewal of their alliance with brutes. I am going early to bed, Virginia. I have promised Captain Bradford to meet him at the Exchange in the morning."

"Nelly's lover has arrived. You remember I told you about John Thomas?"

"Certainly; very interesting; tell Nelly I rejoice with her," but the Major's compliment was at this hour a mere form. He was scarce conscious of it, and rather astonished at Virginia reminding him of so small an affair when such momentous issues were in the balance.

To Nelly, however, the momentous issue was at his kitchen fireside. Virginia thought her very quiet and sober about it. "Are you really glad, Nelly?" she asked. "Is John Thomas all you have been thinking him to be?"

"I am that suited with meeting him again, Miss, that I can put up with him 'most any way."

"Is he going back to sea?"

"No, Miss. John Thomas is as much out of place at sea as a blacksmith would be in white kid gloves. He is going to seek work in the building yards here; and he is talking about wedding, of course."

"Is he in earnest about it?"

"He looks as solemn as if he had swallowed t' church; but I'll wait a bit, and see what's what. There is plenty of big rogues among men; not so many little ones. And when I differed a bit with him, he began to be varry glumpish. It isn't fair, you know, when good temper is all on one side. But he isn't pleased with Captain Bradford to-night."

"Oh, indeed!"

"I'm not taking his side, Miss. It stands to reason the Major and Captain Bradford know what's right; but John Thomas he does hate an Irishman that badly. And he didn't like to hev to march with them, and to-morrow he says he'll be under his own orders,

and he'll hev a good Yorkshire fling at them. I doan't doubt it; he hed allays a power of forthput in him when his feelings got t' upper hand of his reason."

Virginia did not pursue the conversation; she dismissed Nelly, and sat alone with her own musings for an hour. She had always a sense of fuller life in the mere knowledge that the "Arethusa" was in port, and she was almost grateful to the political circumstances which had given Marius an opportunity for pleasing her father. What if she had not seen him? There was to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, and surely in some day a favoring hour! And as Virginia was, like the majority of women, disposed to run into the thickets of poetry whenever she wanted to hide herself from herself, she lifted a little volume of sea songs, and, smiling faintly to the talking letters, she let her eyes and heart wander over the sensitized paper, and feel the dead poet speaking for her.

If 'tis love to wish you near,
To tremble when the wind I hear,
  Because at sea you floating rove;
If of you to dream at night,
To languish when you're out of sight—
  If this be loving, then I love.

If when you're gone, to count each hour,
To ask of every tender power
  That you may kind and faithful prove;
If, void of falsehood and deceit,

I feel a pleasure when we meet—
If this be loving, then I love.*

The next morning Major Mason left home very early. He was full of enthusiasm, and cast his eyes frequently upon his sheathed and shelved sword. It was evident that he thought it might be needed, and that he would not be at all averse to the wearing of it. The Whigs, though thoroughly discomfited on the previous day, had been preparing all night for the coming struggle. There were six thousand of them in and around Masonic Hall, resolved to go in a body to the Sixth Ward poll, and keep it open to all voters; for only Democrats had been permitted to vote there on the previous day.

Major Mason was among the six thousand. It caused some surprise, and Mr. King said, "You here, Major! Glad to see you!"

"I am a Jackson man," he answered promptly, "but I will not see native-born Americans kept from their own ballot-box by Irish ruffians, Mr. King."

"That is what we expected from you, Major. There is intense indignation, and a fixed resolve in the minds of these six thousand men to see justice done. The fifteen wards have each offered us one hundred men, and with this battalion we propose to protect at every poll the sacred right of suffrage."

* Charles Dibdin.

"You will do as good citizens ought to do. I am ready to go to any poll with you."

Indeed, just because he was a Jackson man, the Major was the more determined to express for the respectable portion of his party the bitter antagonism to anything unfair, or savoring of brute force against intelligent choice. And Virginia, though well aware of his excitable temperament, was not uneasy. In the first place she felt sure of Marius—if he was with her father, he would either keep him out of danger or stand by him in it. In the second place, the city was much quieter. The Major came home early in the afternoon, and he came home alone. But her pang of disappointment was soon healed.

"Captain Bradford advised me to rest to-day. He thinks the great struggle will occur to-morrow. All was sullenly quiet when I left the Exchange, and he and Mr. Rhea promised to call this evening and tell me the state of affairs."

"You should have asked them to dinner, father."

"I did so; but the captain said he must go back to his ship for an hour or two, and Mr. Rhea—well, he did not seem of much consequence. I forgot to urge him."

Virginia laughed. "I assure you, father, that Mr. Rhea believes himself to be of great consequence. Did I not tell you he was Captain Bradford's half-brother?"

"Is he, really? I have noticed a resemblance; but there is often a great difference in likeness."

It was about eight o'clock when the brothers arrived. The Major met them with frankness and courtesy, and instantly turned to the elder for information.

"All has gone pretty well, Major. The Mayor and Sheriff, with a large posse, kept the Sixth Ward poll open, and though threats and stones were freely used citizens were able to deposit their votes. But the Irish are drinking constantly, and to-morrow we shall have the result."

The subject was then dropped; every one was weary of it for the hour; and the Major and Marius fell into a discussion regarding the practicability of ocean steamships, and from it drifted easily enough toward the facilities it would afford for a still larger foreign immigration. It was a sore subject with the Major, but Marius contrived to give it a humorous turn.

"I was listening to an Irishman and an Italian quarreling to-day," he said. "The Italian insisted that it was a countryman of his called Columbus who discovered America, and that, in consequence, all Italians had a right in it; and the Irishman lifted his argument with the contemptuous scorn and passion of ignorance:

"'Columbus! is it Columbus you're naming? St. Columbus was, as ivery one knows, an Irishman born and bred. Isn't his cave on the west coast—and haven't I been in it myself? And wasn't Father Denis telling me, too, how the angels built the boat for him, and steered the blessed saint right into New York Bay; and isn't that the good raison for us fighting for what belongs to us?'"

"It is well there is three thousand miles of water between us and Europe, Captain. I am against steam or any other power that will shorten the distance."

At this moment Virginia and Mr. Rhea began to sing. Virginia's voice owed nothing to culture, but its notes were sweet and suffused with feeling, and Marius thought it altogether melodious and charmful. Both the Major and he ceased talking, and as song followed song the Major dozed a little, and Marius drew close to the piano, and watched the speaking faces before him. Jack was singing with her. It seemed a natural concord, but Marius had to look steadily into his brother's face, and recall all there had been between them, that so he might prevent the heartburning of unbrotherly jealousy. But, indeed, had he dared to think, or to hope, he would have found plenty of reasons for hope. Virginia turned to him with a light in her eyes she never showed Jack. She encouraged him by

smiles and gentle words to sing again some of the songs she had heard him troll on the deck of the "Arethusa," when the wind was his only music. And he could not help feeling the glow of the wish, and of the power to do so, when she lifted a sheet of music, and, pointing to its title, said, "You see I have not forgotten!" She struck a few chords, and the captain's voice answered the call in a burst of song that had the salt and sparkle and movement of the sea in it:

Blow high, blow low, let tempests tear
The mainmast by the board;
My heart with thoughts of thee, my dear,
And love well stored,
Shall brave all danger, scorn all fear,
The roaring winds, the raging sea,
In hopes on shore
To be once more
Safe moored, my love, with thee.

"Blow high, blow low"—they sang it together, they sang it over and over, till their voices and hearts blended as blend

Two notes of music
Made for each other, though dissimilar.

Suddenly the Major roused himself and stood up. Captain Bradford perceived that it would be good policy as well as good manners to end his visit; and he left while his welcome was yet warm. "You will meet me in the morning,

Captain," was the Major's last word. He stood with Virginia, bidding both young men "good-night," and no one but Virginia and Marius perceived any deeper meaning in the simple words.

The next morning the Major was too sick to leave his home. It had ceased raining, and the windows were open to admit the scent of the April day, bright and full of sweet odors drifting through the lukewarm atmosphere. But very early the confused noise of shouting men made every heart turn sick with apprehended trouble. "Is there any sound more dreadful than the crying and shouting of human beings?" said Virginia. "It is more savage, more frightsome, more awful than I can imagine the voices of any wild animals. What are they doing, father?"

"Mischief!" answered the Major passionately—"pulling down—mischief—men and women both.'

"Women? Father!"

"I say 'women.' I saw plenty of viragos on the skirts of the crowd yesterday—a ragged fringe they made to it. There will be more of them to-day."

"Not American women?"

"I should think not. The wrath of man is dreadful, but far more dreadful the wrath of woman. And when that woman comes from the west of Ireland! I am thankful none of

us understood their unknown adjectives yesterday."

"But they can surely be restrained, or punished?"

"For speaking Gaelic? No, my dear. You cannot punish a woman for uttering untranslatable sounds, however vile and provoking they may be felt to be."

As the day passed on, the tumult increased; and the noise of trumpets and galloping of horses was added to the human outcry. Major Mason was in a fever of excitement ere Captain Bradford called. He went to the door himself when he saw him coming. The gloomy, angry shadow of the day was on his face, and at first he could scarcely bring down his voice to its natural pitch.

"There has been a bad day, Captain, I fear."

"A dreadful day! a shameful day for a free city to record!"

"Come in and tell us all. How did it begin?"

"That provoking ship on wheels, with her pretentious signal of 'The Constitution,' began it. As she passed Masonic Hall the Whig Committee sitting there saluted her with cheers. The Irish mob, who had been drinking all night, were infuriated by these cheers, and they rushed on the 'Constitution' determined to pull her plank from plank. Then the Whigs inside rushed out to save her, and

they and the sailors drove off the mob. But they only went back to the Sixth Ward for reinforcements, and in a few minutes a huge crowd of dirty, ragged savages streamed with frightful yells up Duane Street, picking up brickbats and paving-stones and pulling up palings as they came."

"Well, sir?"

"The Whigs and sailors fought bravely, but the odds were too great; and they were compelled to fly for refuge into the hall. Then the hall was attacked; but by this time the Mayor and Sheriff, with forty watchmen, had arrived. The Mayor held up his staff and shouted 'Peace'; and the mob answered him with stones and screams and a fierce attack upon his guard. The citizens rushed to defend their Mayor, but after a hard fight, when the Mayor and fifteen watchmen and many citizens were severely wounded, they were overpowered by numbers, and forced to fly by the windows at the rear of the building. Then the mob took possession and gutted the hall."

"And in the mean time what were the citizens doing, sir?"

"The news of this outrage spread like wildfire, and citizens of all political opinions were soon filling Duane, Elm, Pearl, Cross, Augustus, and Chatham Streets—a mass of determined and enraged men. In fact, the fray

had at this point, become a national and not a political one. It was the American element determined to force civic obedience from the Irish element. A battle was imminent. The city was in a state of insurrection. The military from the Navy Yard were sent for. They had just been embarked on board the 'Brandywine' and 'Vincennes.'"

"Just as well. Too many Irish among them to have done any good."

"The military station was next appealed to, and General Ridgely refused help, because he had no authority to give it."

"The stupid old martinet! The necessity was authority enough. General Jackson had given him precedent for that. But perhaps he, too, knew he had too many Irish to make his help serviceable."

"A messenger was then sent flying to Governor's Island, and the city military, under Colonel Sandford, was called out, for there was no more time to lose. The polls were deserted; the mob shouting, '*To the arsenal!*' A great number of citizens, on hearing this cry, made, by a variety of routes, for this point of danger, and got there before the mob. As Americans gathered round, they handed out arms to them: and I saw many strong Jackson men among the Whigs at this time; in reality all decent men had forgotten their politics in the danger to their city."

"Right! I would have joined the Whigs myself for such a purpose. How great is a free city! For, in an emergency like this, you may arm the mass of the people for its defense. How went the fight?"

"I was too much in it to know much about it. You must have heard the shouts and curses that sent terror to every heart for the space of three hours. But when Colonel Sandford marched down Broadway with his men in close column, and drew up at the arsenal, the gleaming of the bayonets and the rattle of arms had a wonderfully quietening influence on the mob. You can scarcely imagine how quietly these shouting brutes sneaked away to the polls again. Sandford is now at the arsenal, and there is a troop of cavalry at the City Hall. When the polls closed they took the ballot-box of the Sixth Ward into the City Hall and locked it up. Six thousand angry, cursing furies followed it, but there it is; and the election is over."

"It has been a shameful outrage on American hospitality. Our city has been on the verge of disaster for three days, because a crowd of foreign ruffians, scarce one of whom can read, chose to deny to the native-born citizens of New York the right of our own ballot-box. Though Lawrence is the Jackson man, I shall not be sorry if he is beaten. I am a good Democrat of the Jackson stripe, Captain,

but I am above all other things an American."

"I sail in the same boat, Major."

"Come up to-morrow night, if you can, and drink a bumper to our success."

"I cannot. My ship has yet all her cargo to take in. I shall have a double force working day and night. They are now waiting for me, and I must hurry away. I shall not see you again at this time." He said the words to the Major, but his eyes sought Virginia's eyes, and, though neither could have defined it, they felt that there was a good understanding between them.

Indeed, Virginia was so happy that she took herself to task for her selfishness. "People are anxious all around me," she thought; "is it right to forget everything in the certainty that Marius loves me?" For she had as yet reflected too little to know that this very compunction of happiness is in itself the soul of a noble thanksgiving.

The Major was much depressed. He had been three days on the tide-top of feeling; it was now ebb. The thought of his losses came with that quick sinking of the heart that gathering money troubles can so cruelly give. Was it worth while to sacrifice property and friends for ideals? A little passion overturned everything. Men thought to be civilized went back so easily to their primitive instincts. "I

am guilty myself," he said penitently. "In my heart, I have slain all my political enemies. I have only needed the power to second my will." He rose with the thought and walked sadly to the window. The silent crescent of the moon moved in the heavens with a calm and melancholy beauty, and as he gazed at it he said:

"It is the firmament that shows his handiwork. No unruliness there, Virginia. Every star knoweth its orbit, and keeps it. How different are the ways of men! What must He think of us?"

"Surely men are growing better, father. They have eternity to grow in."

"You are right, Virginia. For anything we know, humanity may be only in its childhood; it may even yet be struggling and suffering in its birth pains. And the end of all——"

"What is the end, father?"

"To become spiritual beings; that is the end of all our efforts."

But for a few days longer the Major was compelled to feel himself very much the creature of a material existence. The anxiety was by no means over. The morning after election there were at least fifteen thousand men in Wall Street and the adjacent points waiting for the result. The count was exceedingly close, and the Whigs at the Exchange, and the Jackson men at Tammany Hall,

shouted themselves hoarse alternately, as the news was favorable to them. A little after midnight, Mr. Lawrence, the Jackson candidate, was declared to have won the mayoralty.

Men then went home for a few hours, but not until the character of the Common Council was known did any one feel it possible to return to his usual business and in spite of all personal loss and inconvenience, an equally large number crowded the Exchange and other points until this final count was ascertained. Near midnight of the next day it was declared to be in favor of the Whigs, that party having a decided majority among the aldermen and assistants.

"So we have really lost, though we elected the Mayor," said Major Mason; "and Fish and Rhinelander and others like them are to blame. Certainly, 'the tools to those that can handle them'; but we want tools, and not bludgeons and paving-stones."

"Are you sure the Whigs have won?"

"Virtually they have, and they are so conscious of it that they will give a great Whig banquet at Castle Garden on the 15th. There are to be double rows of tables within the outer circumference, and three pipes of wine, and beer without stint is ordered for the thousands who are to share the feast. The 'Constitution' has been placed on the top of

the entrance to the garden, and she will fire salutes during the *fête*. I shall dine with you, my dear, and much more to my satisfaction."

"I am grateful the affair is over; and I trust New York will find out her own mind with less ado in the future. I have just seen Mr. Astor pass; he looks ill and feeble. I wonder if he will really build the fine hotel he promised New York. I think that is of far more consequence than the politics of our mayor and aldermen."

"I dare say he was going down town about it. The demolition of the buildings on its site begins immediately. It will be a great advantage and ornament to the city. Here is the mail, my dear. What a romance it gives to every morning! When its possibilities are past, how often the day seems over, and life at a standstill!"

"I hope it may bring me a nice letter from Jane. The three last ones have been full of dissatisfaction."

"I am sorry to hear that."

"She says it is the climate—and the slaves. I fear it touches her still more nearly."

"When did you call on Mr. Keteltas?"

"About a month ago."

"And I have kept out of his way for about the same time. His Whiggery has been so rabid. It was impossible for us to agree, and

I did not wish to quarrel with him, even on politics. But, if Jane makes any serious complaints, give her no advice until you have found out the ground you step on. Between husband and wife an interferer has a thankless office—perhaps, indeed, they deserve it. At any rate, put the sign 'Danger' on all sides."

CHAPTER XI.

THE BROAD GATEWAY OF WRONG.

"The power of one man over another is contrary to nature; it is only human law that makes one man a slave and another a free man. In nature there is no such distinction; wherefore it is an unjust arrangement; it is the result of force and compulsion."—*Aristotle.*

"But man over men
He made not lord; such title to Himself
Reserving:—human left from human free."
—*Milton.*

THE hint of dissatisfaction which Virginia had spoken of in Jane's position was more than justified by her letters. After that first rose-colored effusion, the bright tints faded away very rapidly. To say the least, it was evident that Jane was not acclimating kindly, either in a physical or social sense. She was in a position requiring infinite love and patience and toleration, and Jane was neither patient nor tolerant.

The improvements promised her in the house were made up to a certain extent. She went into Memphis with Nigel and bought new furniture for the parlor and two of the chambers; then Nigel professed to be short of money. This profession was made with so

many apologies and affectionate terms that Jane accepted the curtailment at the time almost cheerfully. But in reality she was wounded by the partial preparations for her honor and comfort.

"We ought to have bought furniture in New Orleans," she said gloomily one morning, when the poverty and inefficiency of the Memphis stores annoyed her.

"The house is as well furnished now, Jane, as any in the neighborhood; as Mrs. Defoe's, for instance."

"But she had not been accustomed to New York houses and furnishings, Nigel. Why, at the Pagets yesterday I saw a bed in a sitting-room! A very showy, snowy-looking affair: but imagine it, a bed in a sitting-room!"

"I would advise you to study the Pagets a little less scornfully, Jane. They are *the* people of this neighborhood. They are noted for their refinement and elegance."

"I imagined that *we* were the people of the neighborhood; and, really, there is nothing at all to study about the Pagets. I think them exceedingly affected and commonplace."

"Jane Forfar!"

"I should be very sorry to imitate them in the most trifling matter, Nigel. Indeed, Imogene Paget is always trying covertly to imitate me. I wish she would not, she only caricatures me."

The Pagets were Jane's nearest neighbors, and her bitterest enemies. Between Nigel and Imogene Paget there had been a great deal of that ceremonious and sentimental attention which Southern men delighted to render and Southern women delighted to receive.

Nigel understood Imogene's simple, sentimental music, and could join her in its rendering; and the highest literary ideal of both was quite satisfied with the fashionable "Annuals," their simpering beauties, and pretty poetic platitudes, and conventional stories. Nigel had given Imogene an "Annual" for four consecutive years. He liked Imogene's way of dressing. He liked her assumption of frailty and dependence. He liked her evident admiration for himself. Her affected want of interest in life since his marriage flattered him. He pitied with all his heart the pale, drooping girl, who always, on his entrance, looked up to him with a melancholy smile, and then looked down to sigh, and let her large eyes fill with tears.

Jane's sharp glances saw these things also, though she affected not to see them. She understood that her young husband was playing a game of sentiment—a dangerous game—but she thought she was able to checkmate Miss Imogene Paget. A wife has so many solid advantages to put against a mere romantic affection. But Jane had been taught very few womanly tactics. She did not know

how to cover underhand enmity with smiles. She could not stoop to conquer. She had not the evil patience and the low cunning of women amiably willing to do the devil's petty wickednesses for him.

The influence of the Pagets was soon felt in every part of her domestic arrangements, and Jane resented it. To be told what Mrs. Paget or Miss Imogene thought on any subject or arrangement drove Jane at once to an opposite opinion. She believed, and she was not wrong, that it was the Pagets who had interfered with her plan of refurnishing her house. She did not, indeed, hear Mrs. Paget's words, but she divined them very closely:

"Really, Nigel, I should think you have done enough. You know our first families do not depend upon furniture for their social respect; we leave that to *parvenus*. I am afraid the Soulés and Tatams and Dezels will feel your extravagance as a little personal. Mrs. Forfar cannot expect to introduce Northern prodigality among our best people—especially now, when the North is irritating us beyond endurance. I should think Mrs. Forfar would consider this, and efface her Northern fancies as much as possible. Or is it your fault, Nigel?"

Exactly such a conversation as this occurred the day after a visit which the Pagets had made to the Forfar place. The newly fur-

nished parlor was a flat contradiction to all Southern tradition. It was "so No'the'n," Miss Imogene said regretfully; "and she feahed she would neveh be able to feel at home again. Mrs. Fo'fah must please fo'give her the feeling; she was so fond of old ways, and she could not enduah changes—she nevah could."

This calling of her "Mrs. Fo'fah" was one of those small offenses Jane could not stand. It seemed a trifle, but it roused in her an irrepressible scorn and anger. In the days of her early acquaintance with Nigel, his soft, slurring speech had been one of his charms; but she had grown to loathe the clipped syllables and the drawling intonations.

"Why do those women call me 'Mrs. Fo'fah?" she asked angrily. "Cannot they pronounce the letter 'r'?"

"It is the Southern way," in pointedly Southern patois.

"They ought to correct it. A language without consonants makes you believe that the people who use it have no character. What is 'force,' or 'father,' or 'mother,' or 'fortune,' or 'fortress,' or thousands of the best and strongest words, without their 'r'?"

"What is it to you, Jane, if Southern people prefer to drop their 'r'?"

"I don't like my name ruined."

"I gave you the name."

"It is originally Scotch, and I am certain a Scotchman would spit 'Fo'fah' out of his mouth."

Then Nigel rose with offended dignity, and, putting on his wide straw hat, called for his horse, and ostentatiously took the way to the Paget place.

Jane sat down to write to Virginia. She did not repeat the argument, but she allowed its influence to pervade the letter, and to bring under condemnation subjects more easily handled. The weather was already hot. She could not imagine how she was to endure it at midsummer. She had chills and fevers. She had neither friends nor neighbors; people disliked her on principle, without any other reason than that she came from the North. There was not a book in the house, except those she had brought with her, and she knew them by heart. Her piano would not keep in tune. And the slaves! And the whole question of slavery! It was horrible! She felt as if she had fallen asleep in New York, and, on awakening in this strange, hot, haunted place, had gradually come to see things unspeakable, and to know at last that it was hell.

This apparently trifling conversation about a single letter was in reality an important and critical turning point in many lives. Nigel reached the Paget place in a mood peculiarly sensitive to influence and interference. He

made no complaint, but men never hide a matrimonial dispute, and Mrs. Paget knew there had been one.

"Nigel," she said, "Mrs. Dezel was here yesterday, and I do think it my duty to tell you how people are talking. Of course, we all know that you intend to run for the Legislature next election, and no man has a better chance —if you only will not throw your chances away."

"What am I doing wrong now, Madame?"

"Has it not entered your mind that Mrs. Forfar ought to have a maid? People say one of two things—either that you are not able to afford her one, or that she is an Abolitionist, and will not have a slave to wait upon her. It is even currently reported that Mrs. Forfar sweeps and dusts her own rooms rather than have slaves around her. You know how sensitive our best people are now."

"Mrs. Forfar is—excuse me, Madame. I shall take care that Mrs. Forfar does no more sweeping and dusting. That habit comes from her Dutch father and mother. She is always cleaning something. Such energy is frightful and vulgar, I know, but it had never struck me in the light you speak of."

"But you can see?"

"Oh, yes! I see what ruin is in it." He was sipping strong coffee as he spoke, and at intervals lifting his eyes consciously to catch

the dreamy orbs of Miss Imogene, who lay opposite him in a hammock, with a fan of peacocks' feathers in her hand, and a guitar on the floor by her side.

"Have you a girl suitable, Nigel? I mean for a lady's maid. If not, I can hire you one."

"I would rather buy," he said, "unless Palma would do."

"Why not? She is a good seamstress, and nearly white."

Nigel glanced at Imogene, then at Mrs. Paget, and shrugged his shoulders most expressively. A short silence followed, but it was quickly broken by the Madame's purring assertion:

"She durst not say a word. I should select Palma. What if she does talk? Mrs. Forfar's interests and yours are identical, I suppose?"

"Of course. And I shall give Palma orders she will not dare to break. She has an insane dread of the lash."

No more was said at that time, but at dusk of the same day Forfar lit his cigar and strolled slowly down to the negro quarters. He went to a small cabin that appeared to have been recently erected, and, pushing open the light door, walked in. A woman was sitting alone in the gloom. Her hands were dropped upon her lap, her eyes were dropped upon her hands. An intense despair darkened and sad-

dened her face. She was surrounded by coarse cloth, and coarse garments made from it, and an unfinished dress, scrimp and shapeless, had fallen to her feet.

"Palma."

She stood up mechanically and uttered the word "Master."

"Palma, you will come to the house in the morning. Your work in future will be to wait on Mrs. Forfar, and do her sewing. Understand you? You are to be her maid."

"Yes, Master."

"And it will spare you one hundred lashes to forget everything that happened before Mrs. Forfar came here. Do you understand?"

"Yes, master."

There was nothing more for him to say, and yet he lingered, pushing the garments hither and thither with his tasseled cane. Palma stood erect; her eyes, full of despair, were fixed upon him, and he was aware of the inquiry in them, and anxious to avoid it without seeming to do so.

"Madame rises at seven. I hope you will appreciate my remembrance of you, and be a good girl."

He had the door in one hand and was about to open it; then Palma, with a sudden recognition of her departing opportunity, sprang forward. She dropped at his feet, and clasped her hands upon them.

"Master!" she sobbed, "Master! what has become of my mother?"

He made no answer; only withdrew himself haughtily from her touch, pushed wide the door, and passed out into the night. The sound of the woman weeping pursued and even annoyed him. Under the large trees he could not escape its influence. For trees have human relations. And to what sorrows, and fears, and agonies of wrong and injustice, had these overshadowing branches been the witnesses! Sometimes they seemed, in their angry tossing to-and-fro, to protest against them; again, as on this night, they drooped gloomily, their leaves utterly dumb, as if sullen and heavy with a self-devouring, meditating, dogged melancholy. The dim, still air was also full of bats silently swirling around him, and one of them got into his shuddering hair, and he remembered an unpleasant negro superstition about the circumstance.

He was creepy and uncomfortable, and glad to reach the more open space in which the house stood. Jane was on the gallery. She sat in a large rocking-chair, and had an air at once sad and resentful. But at this moment he felt the need of some nature sympathetic to his own, and he spoke kindly to her, and advised her to cover her head, if she were going to remain in the night air. She was pleased at the small thoughtfulness, and went in to

get her linen sunbonnet. When she returned, Nigel said:

"It is high time, my dear Jane, that you ceased waiting upon yourself. I am not always here to attend to you, and I do not like you running up and down stairs so much. In this climate it is not considered healthy." He knew that if he said, "In our circle it is not considered ladylike," she would suspect at once the interference of the Pagets, so he chose the form that appeared most personally thoughtful.

Jane was not inclined to be suspicious. Honest in thought and word herself, it was only on good evidence, or excellent circumstantial proofs, she questioned the truthfulness of others. She was grateful for the care Nigel's words implied, but she declared "she would much prefer her solitude and independence."

"Sometimes, Nigel," she said, "I am very much depressed, and I cry a little, and it does me good, and nobody any harm; but if I had a woman sitting in my room always, I should feel her a dreadful incubus. I would have to be under control at every moment of my life, or she would often judge me unjustly. Then she might talk to the other servants, and make people think that you were unkind to me."

"People know me too well to imagine I could be unkind to any woman. How much less to you, my wife? And, indeed, Jane, in your

present delicate health, it would be of the greatest benefit if you were compelled to control yourself more. My darling, I know the climate better than you do, and I cannot let you be alone any longer. As it gets warmer, you might faint in your chamber, and no one near to give you assistance."

"But Nigel, dear."

"For my sake, Jane."

Then she gave in, and Nigel proceeded to tell her that the girl Palma was to be her own from that day.

"I will have the proper papers made out," he said, "and I think you will find her a great comfort. She is very quiet lately—she has had a little trouble; but negroes soon forget. You will find her much above the usual maid. Palma has had advantages. She can even read and write. But I would not be too familiar with her. She has an infernal temper if she is crossed."

"Do you think a woman of that kind is likely to add to my happiness, Nigel? Really, I would rather be alone."

"Try her for two months. If you cannot manage her, I will find a way to do it." He puffed his cigar viciously, and was silent, and suddenly less affectionate.

In the morning, when Jane awoke, the girl Palma was standing at one of the windows of her room. She lay quiet and watched her.

Her face it was impossible to see, but a great deal could be inferred from her attitude, from the long slender arms dropped so hopelessly downward, and the intentness of her gaze outward.

"Palma!"

Palma turned quickly and came to the bedside. She tried to smile, and showed her new mistress an exceedingly handsome face, intelligent and sensitive; and very nearly white.

"Palma, you are to wait on me, and to sew for me."

"Master told me so. He says he has given me to you. Oh, mistress! I will try and serve you well. I am in trouble now, but old Sybil says the pain will go away, and that I shall forget. Till then, please bear with me."

"Poor Palma! You shall tell me your trouble, and I will weep with you. Now bring my coffee, Palma. You will not find me a hard mistress."

In those few words mistress and slave unlocked each other's hearts. But for some weeks neither ventured further than the threshold of the sacred places. Often, when Jane pretended to be asleep, she was really watching the tall, silent woman, so sorrowfully and patiently rolling the tiny hems into which she set the tiniest of stitches. Often, when Jane was asleep, Palma held her work in suspense, and watched her unconscious mistress,

and wondered how much she might dare to tell her.

In the mean time the season was advancing, and the heat becoming exceedingly damp and oppressive. It brought with it a riotous vegetable and reptile life, and a great human melancholy. The garden after dusk, though glimmering with fire-flies, was pervaded with the very soul of sadness. The odors of the soil, the heavy perfume of hot flowers, the musky smell of hidden snakes, the misty air laden with malaria, and full of unspeakable and intangible things, was scarcely more depressing to Jane than the exhaustion of the monotonous sunshine, resonant with cicadas and the never-ending calls and songs of birds, whose melody even became painful in its iteration.

She was also sick and depressed and suffering from those vague fears and languors which thrill the heart of a woman approaching maternity, no matter how often the experience comes to her. If Jane had felt keenly before, she now felt everything with a passionate force and tenderness that almost terrified her. Of course she was a little trying to live with; she wanted love more than meat or drink; gentle, sympathetic words more than medicine. And Nigel was not always equal to such demands.

One hot morning she awoke in a terror. She looked toward the window where Palma

was usually sitting, and the girl was not there. It was a little earlier than usual, but the irrepressible sunshine was flooding everything; and angry tones from the yard at the back of the house came in through the open window. She slipped out of bed and stood still to listen. Nigel's voice was uppermost, and in a few moments she heard his step approaching her room. When he entered it, Jane was apparently in a deep sleep. The instantaneous piece of deception was altogether apart from her character; she adopted it as unconsciously as we wink the eyelid to protect the eye. Nigel looked at her, walked from the bedside, and purposely made a noise which he judged would awaken her. She answered it as if it had been a call:

"Good-morning, Nigel. Is it really late? Where is Palma, I wonder?"

Then he kissed her, and she perceived the worry and excitement on his face he wished her to see.

"What is the matter, Nigel? You look as if something had made you very angry."

"Something has made me dreadfully angry, Jane. I have just had a message from Mrs. Paget. Those abolition thieves have been on her plantation, and very likely on mine, and who do you think their devilish cunning used for an emissary? A child—a mere child—Palma's sister July, only eleven years old; but

the little imp can read. There was a terrible row over there last night—almost an insurrection—and Mrs. Paget sent Eugene Lanny at daybreak over here, with a warning to me. Fortunately, Lanny and two other gentlemen were at the Paget's last night, or I dare not think what those two poor ladies would have done."

"Palma's sister! I did not know that Palma had a sister."

"I hire her to Mrs. Paget. Palma is unmanageable when she has her sister with her. I keep her at Mrs. Paget's as a hostage for Palma's good behavior. When she forgets herself, I do not allow her to see July. When she is good, I permit them to meet occasionally."

Jane did not answer, but her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes full of a light that Nigel understood to mean rebellion. He did not notice it, but went on with his tirade.

"The little minx! the wicked little imp. But she got her deserts for her treachery."

"Oh, Nigel! Did she do anything wrong? How could a child be strong enough? Insurrection! that is fire, murder,—a child!"

"A child! Yes, but the emissary of some abolition thief. If I could catch him, I would burn him at the stake. I would make a day's pleasure of it."

"If a man has committed a crime Nigel,

there is the law; it might keep you from making a savage of yourself. Tell me quietly what has happened."

"It is very hard to be quiet under such provocation. Last night Mrs. Paget had a little dance, and the negroes in the quarters took advantage of it to hold what they call a 'prayer-meeting,' and July was reading them a paper—a most bloodthirsty paper—when Lanny saw and heard them."

"How did Lanny happen to find out so much? I would not trust Eugene Lanny's word about an old slipper!" and she kicked a slipper lying at her feet out of the way, with a contempt that had something very personal in it.

"In such a matter as this Lanny is to be relied on. His horse was sick, and he went secretly to the stable to see that his orders had been attended to. Then, as he wanted to finish his smoke, he walked round by the quarters—a providential interference as it proved. He heard a noise in Jasper's cabin, and some one reading, and he says it struck him like an inspiration that it was an abolitionist. So he put his eye to one of the cracks between the logs, and saw and heard July reading the damnable paper."

"Then the devil gave him the 'inspiration.' What a scoundrel he must be to peep between logs!"

"Jane! do you know what you are saying?"

"Yes, I know what I am saying. I vow it was a most contemptible act. Why didn't he open the door and go in, and take the paper himself if it was so dangerous?"

"Would you have done so?"

"Yes, I would have done so. I would have read the paper to the poor, ignorant creatures; and if it was lies, then I would have explained the truth to them. If slavery is a divine institution, it can be surely defended. I hope Eugene Lanny will never try to speak to me again. The sneak!"

"For God's sake, Jane, if you are going to talk and act in that insane way, keep your own room! You will ruin me."

"I behave very well before all the first families I meet. Can I not speak freely to you? What steps did Mr. Lanny take?"

"Of course he went to the house and reported what he had seen and heard."

"Of course! What then?"

"It was decided not to punish all of those present."

"That would be inconvenient to Mrs. Paget —perhaps expensive."

"But to make an example of Jasper, in whose cabin the meeting was held; of July, who read the paper; and of the man Randall, whom Mr. Lanny heard praying to the Almighty to hasten the time and send them a

Moses to lead them into freedom. Such impiety! Such presumption is abominable! Flogging is too small a punishment for it."

"Perhaps the Almighty did not think it was impiety, Nigel. If slaves believe themselves to be wronged—if they are 'weary and heavy laden,' you know *who* said, 'Come unto me.'"

Then Nigel walked to the window and closed it, and to the door and looked along the corridor for listeners. When he came back to his wife's side, his face was black and stern with anger. "Jane," he said, taking her hands in a firm grip, and looking her steadily in the face, "you must understand at once that such talk is wicked and ruinous."

"It is from the Bible. You go to church every Sunday."

"Do you want to kill me? I shall be held accountable for your words and deeds. Lanny will not speak to you, but he will say to me, 'Mr. Forfar, your wife called me a scoundrel and a sneak.'"

"He is a scoundrel and a sneak."

"But, Jane, see what a position you put me in, if I repudiate what my own wife says. If I do not, I must answer your words at the risk of my life. Lanny will certainly challenge me."

Jane sat silent on the edge of her bed, one bare foot tapping the floor with a passionate rapidity.

"You have yet to learn that Southern people cannot be tampered with even in looks or words. Listen, and I will tell you how promptly these ungrateful conspirators were punished. The 'prayer-meeting'—as they called it—broke up at nine o'clock. Before ten, Jasper had received fifty lashes, Randall fifty, and July thirty. She was insensible at the thirtieth, or she would have received ten more."

"Oh, the poor little one! God pity her! Thirty lashes with those brutal cowhides! A child eleven years old! Nigel Forfar, it was a hellish act! How could God permit it?"

"Mrs. Paget was exceedingly reasonable. If the child would have told *who* gave her the paper, she would have got off with a much slighter punishment."

"She wouldn't tell?"

"A devil of stubbornness was in her; she would have died under the lash—but she would not tell. If she would have spoken, the rascal might have now been in our hands."

"The noble child! The little martyr!"

"Jane, do keep your senses. Remember this. God has placed every one, black and white, in the position he wishes them to fill. It is flat rebellion against God to want to get out of it. God put men and women in slavery; when they plan to escape from it they plot against God, and they deserve punishment."

"Then every white man who plans to become rich when he is poor, or honorable when his is mean, plots against God. Nigel, you cannot make me believe that wrong is right."

"No. I suppose you will not hold your tongue until I am shot for its license. My God!" he cried, smiting his hands together, "why did I do it!"

"For money, sir. You married me for money."

"I was not thinking of you." Then he flung the door open, and left the room in a passion; and Jane began to dress herself, weeping bitterly, and talking to herself as she did so in low but impetuous words. She had not thought of calling Palma, the need of action was so imperative. But ere her toilet was completed, Palma entered with a cup of coffee. Jane looked at her with a steady compassion, The girl was beside herself with grief. Her eyes were swollen, her pallor had the grayness of ashes, her hands trembled so violently that there was danger of the service falling from them.

Jane took it from her, set it on the table, and then turned to the heart-broken girl and clasped her hands. She began to cry again, and her sobs shook her as a reed is shaken in a tempest. The next moment Jane's arms were round her; they were weeping and sobbing together.

"My little July! My darling sister! I would

have taken the flogging for her—oh, how gladly!"

"Can you get near her, Palma?"

"I have been to her. Toby came at midnight, woke me out of sleep, and told me. I went in the dark—across fields. She was just coming to her senses—her little back and shoulders torn and bleeding. I nursed her till I dared stay no longer. Oh, Miss Jane, if I could tell you all! if I could tell you all!"

Such comfort as Jane could give she gave; such help as she could send she sent. Night after night Palma crossed the fields in the dark, thanking God that there was darkness to hide her, praying to him, as she ran, for protection against the snakes she dreaded, and the loosened dogs, and the still more dangerous white men who might meet and question her.

No more words on the subject passed between Nigel and his wife. He had really used the argument most likely to influence Jane—the assurance that he would be held responsible for her words and acts—and he understood that it would be sufficient to make her prudent in the expression of her opinions for the future. For he had the greatest confidence in the affection of his wife for him. It never entered his head that women like Jane Keteltas love permanently only what they respect. But though the subject was not referred to, Jane knew that it was stirring the community to its depths.

Every planter in the vicinity had some similar experience. Every stranger in town was suspected of abolition motives, and Jane was aware that Nigel was watching his slaves night and day.

This event occurred at the end of August. Nearly three weeks after it she was one day very sick and fevered. It was a terribly hot afternoon, and the whole house seemed to be waiting for it to pass away. Palma lay on a pallet by Jane's bedside in a deep sleep. The girl was worn out by her night flights and vigils, and Jane, though she wanted fresh water imperatively, did not like to awaken her. She put slippers on her bare feet, and went down-stairs to the dining-room. She saw no one and she heard no one. Nigel usually took his siesta on the eastern corner of the piazza. It was well shaded by vines, and in the early part of the afternoon the coolest spot to be found. A window that lighted a small hall looked upon this shady corner; it was, of course, open, but the green outside blinds were closed. A momentary curiosity seized her; she wished to know if Nigel was there; if so, and he was awake, she would ask him to prepare for her one of the cool, refreshing sherry cobblers he prided himself upon concocting.

As she approached the window she heard voices—Nigel's and that of a stranger. The words, "Palma's brothers," arrested her attention. She wondered what new trouble was

coming to Palma through her brothers. And she was a little curious also, for Palma had never told her that she had brothers. At first her attitude was indeterminate and only slightly interested; but gradually she forgot everything in the mere act and tension of listening. Her face was flushed with scorn, her small hands clenched, her long, loosened, fair hair seemed to radiate anger and emotion.

With tightly shut lips she went up-stairs, making no effort to disguise her presence; at that moment quite indifferent as to whether Nigel knew or did not know she had been a witness to the bargain he had been making.

As she re-entered the room she turned the key in the door, went to Palma, and awakened her. The girl was evidently used to sudden demands upon her intelligence. She sat up instantly, with an expression at once cautious and intent. Jane had thrown herself upon the bed, and she beckoned Palma to her side.

"Have you two brothers, Palma? Are they in New York?"

The questions were asked in a whisper, and the girl, with a white, terrified face, answered them with an affirmative nod of the head.

"Do you know a man called Wilkins?"

"A slave trader, a slave hunter."

It was now Jane's turn to nod.

"My God! Miss Jane, what is he going to do?"

"Going to New York for your brothers.

He is to take them to New Orleans and sell them there."

Palma was stricken dumb. She stood still looking at Jane, as if doubting her senses.

"Do you know where they are?"

"With a man called Parker; he keeps a store in William Street. I wrote to them there often when master was away. Can Wilkins take them in New York? Oh, Miss Jane, are they also in danger of this hell?"

"If they are not freed, I fear they are. But they can be warned—they must be warned. I will find a way to do it. Palma, how do they come to be in New York?"

"My father sent them North to be educated—he sent me also, and little July, but—oh, I dare not tell you, Miss Jane! I dare not! Master Nigel would kill me—he said he would give me one hundred if I did—half a hundred would kill me—one lash would kill me. I should die of the shame and the injustice."

"He shall not touch you. I swear he shall not, unless he kill me first. Oh, I have heard enough; you may freely tell me all now. And he shall not hurt your brothers. I have friends in New York. I will send them word. Come close to me, Palma. You must tell me all now, and speak very softly. This is a thing for you and me; and no one else must know it."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HAND OF WOMAN.

"Well, then, dear mistress, since I see that thou,
Being human, hast a human heart, and knowest
No stubborn purpose, I will tell thee all,
The whole truth, nothing concealing."

—*Maidens of Trachis.*

"Throned in the vaulted heart, his dread resort,
Inexorable Conscience holds his court;
With still, small voice the plots of guilt disarms,
Bares his masked brow, his lifted arm alarms.
Hear him, ye tyrants! hear this truth sublime:
'He who allows oppression shares the crime.'"

THE dazzling sunshine—the hot mid-afternoon. If Jane and Palma had thought of fit time and circumstance, they would not, perhaps, have chosen such an hour for a tragical confidence. But when the heart is dominated by a great sorrow it is above nature; it even in some measure fits nature to its own mood. And to Jane the very monotony of the splendid sunshine—the quivering of the air in the great heat and the buzzing of the myriads of flies and insects who delighted in it—had become an almost intolerable oppression and depression. It seemed fitting enough to her that words of horror and wrong should pervade the

hot, tainted air, and mingle with the buzzing of the tormenting insects, and steal away through the closed blinds, beyond the melancholy garden, into the sullen shadows of the swamp.

She drew Palma close to her side, and, taking her hand, said, "Who was your father, Palma?"

"Master Stephen Forfar."

"My husband's father?"

"Yes, Miss Jane."

"Then you are my husband's sister." She looked at the girl with eyes bright and shining, and full of a fierce inquiry after the truth.

"His slave. Miss Jane."

"I say his sister; and July is his sister. Yet he could rejoice in the child's suffering, and never feel one thrill of admiration for her loyalty! And this man is my husband! the father of my unborn child! Palma, I am in an agony of horror and shame."

The girl sat still, with dropped eyes. She had drawn her hand out of Jane's hand and clasped them together on her knee. Her whole attitude was one of self-restraint. It said as plainly as words, "This sorrow and shame is mine. I do not wish you to take any part in it."

"Palma, who was your mother?"

"She was called Tatelle Revel; and was born on the Revel place, near New Orleans. She was nearly white, and was well taught and well

reared. But when she was twenty years old Master Revel died, and the Madame sold the slaves and went to Paris to live. Master Stephen Forfar was in New Orleans at the time, and he bought my mother for nurse to Master Nigel, whose mother died when he was born. She was very fond of Master Nigel, and very good to him. Old Master loved her as his life, and for twenty-two years she lived here as mistress of everything. She had four children—my brothers Steve and Alexander, July, and myself. The boys were sent to a school in Ohio before they were ten years old; and they have never come back. July, and I also, were sent there; but three years ago I wanted to see mother so much, and July fretted so continually for her, that I came down the river again. We were to go back, father said, in September, for he always had a fear about us; but we thought little of any danger then. It is not my father's fault we are slaves. He had given my mother free papers for herself and all her children—put them into her hands, and told her to keep them as her life, because he knew he had trouble at his heart, and might die at any moment.

"When I brought July home three summers ago she was eight years old, and I was sixteen. I had been in a good school for nine years, and had learnt all they could teach me. I wanted to go to France and study music and singing,

and father and mother were pleased with the idea. We had talked over my plans one morning, and I was busy all the rest of the day sewing on the dresses I was to take with me. I was so happy, I sang all day long. At nightfall mother looked into my room, and told me I had done enough. It was her custom to dress very handsomely for the evening, and I can see her yet in her black silk gown, and gold bracelets, and a black lace shawl folded around her. I threw down my work and began to wash my face. Suddenly I heard a shriek. Such a shriek, Miss Jane, you cannot imagine! It makes my ears ache to remember it. July came screaming up-stairs; I ran to meet her, and saw two men carrying Master Stephen to his bed."

"Your father, you mean?"

"Yes. He was dead. My mother was insensible. Master Nigel was with the body. I stayed with mother. It was some hours before she came to herself. Her words to me were, 'Palma! Palma! The red box in my trunk! The red box! Go for it; quick, quick!'

"I knew what she meant, and my own heart sank with terror. I was shocked that I had not thought of it before. Scarce taking breath, I flew up-stairs. Mother's room was open, her trunk was open, but the red box was there. Mother was sitting up in bed watching for me. I shall never forget the anguish of

anxiety on it. When I held up the box, she clasped her hands and fell back and began to cry and to thank God. I put the box under her pillow, and she sobbed herself to sleep in a passion of grateful prayer. Miss Jane! Miss Jane! *The box was empty!*"

"Oh, Palma! Palma!"

"Our free papers were in it—they were gone! We never saw them again."

At these words Jane gave a little shriek, and turned her face into her pillow. The girl stooped toward her and whispered:

"The box had been opened—the papers were stolen—we were slaves at Master Nigel's mercy. After the funeral mother tried to talk to him. He sent her to the kitchen. In another week he sent her to the slave market. I stole away one afternoon and ran all the way into Memphis to see her there."

"Palma! Palma! how could you bear it?"

"She had the rough striped dress of a field hand on. She had grown old. She was going mad. I had to tell her who I was. O God! If I had never seen her so, I might bear it better! My mother, my dear, good, gentle mother! I shall never see her again! Never, never!"

"And now he wants to sell his brothers!—his father's own children. God in heaven, how can I trust him with my child? Palma, I am going to write to my friend in New York. I will not let any one commit such a crime."

She sat down at once and began to write to Virginia. It was a shame and a trial to her. If it had been possible, she would have hid her husband's share in the crime, and she did beg Virginia to remember that he was not a sinner above all others in the matter. "No one here would blame him for it," she wrote; "it is the outcome of an institution radically wrong." And she vented on the institution the scorn and the passion of anger she felt for the individual sin.

To get the letter safely posted was the next thing to be done. She asked Nigel to go into Memphis with her the next morning; "she required a number of small articles," she said, "no one could get but herself."

"Why not take Palma?" he asked. "Cato will drive you in perfect safety, and Palma will be of more use in shopping than I can be. I have to get money to-morrow for a man who is going away to do some business for me."

She accepted the change without apparent feeling, but she was inwardly delighted. Wilkins could not leave till Nigel had got money for him. So, then, the letter would have at least a day's advantage in time. Thus far events were on their side. It was not until the letter was posted that she remembered Virginia had been at the White Sulphur Springs with her father since the beginning of June. She did not know whether she had returned to

New York. A sudden resolve to write to the boys themselves came to her, but was as suddenly put aside. Any letter directed to them would probably be detained. Nigel would not have forgotten that precaution. She had done her best. She very wisely let well alone, and did not embarrass the Power behind her by a superfluity of events to control.

Her faith in the unknown was not misplaced. The letter arrived at the Mason House five minutes before Virginia came back to it, after nearly four months' absence. She did not, however, open it at once. Nelly had a festival lunch ready, and a budget of household news to tell Virginia as she prepared herself for it; and they had no sooner sat down to it than Mr. Keteltas joined them.

"My friend," he said, taking the Major's hand, "you are welcome home. New York has been doing badly in your absence. There was one good man the less in it."

"Sit down and eat with us, Mr. Keteltas."

"I will. Many things have happened since you went away, and I can give you the truth on all matters. I have experienced—yes."

"About the United States Bank?"

"Who can speak with more knowledge? Congress had a wasted session of seven months. Jackson is as much master of the situation as he was at the beginning. In a word, opposition to him is useless. You will see that in

November 'Hurrah for Jackson' will be the cry, against which nothing will prevail."

"Right always prevails, my friend."

"Yes, yes; but if God will not, man cannot. And what is to be done with these abolition fanatics if He will not take them in hand?"

"I heard there had been trouble in New York."

"In New York, in Boston, in Philadelphia. Newark and Norwich have the same spirit. In the latter towns, if a negro appears there is a riot. These Irishmen, who are always talking of the slavery of Ireland and the tyranny of England, run a 'nagur,' as they call him, down like a mad dog. I thought they would burn the city on the 10th of July."

"They began in the theater, did they not?"

"Yes. An English actor there put them in a passion; they wouldn't have an English actor, and as England had just freed her slaves in the West Indies, they were all for slavery; and besides, as I heard one saying, if the 'nagur' was free he would be coming up North and taking the bit of work out of their own hands. So, having done what damage they could to the theater, they resolved to express their opinion in their usual way on the abolition question. Some one called out 'The abolitionists,' some one else 'Tappan' and 'Rose Street,' and away they went, yelling like a regiment of devils. They fired Tappan's house. and while

they were burning his pictures and furniture the firemen came thundering down upon them. Imagine now the engines 41 and 37 driving the mob before them! The engines had been running a race all the way to Rose Street—a neck-and-neck affair—and the noise of the crowds cheering them all the way there could be heard even above the shouts of the mob."

"What then?"

"The firemen took possession of Tappan's house, and the mob went for Rev. Mr. Ludlow's church. Well, he deserved it. He had been preaching abolition. That was not his duty, Major, nor yet the doctrine he was licensed to preach. They were five thousand strong when they got to the church in Macdougal Street. They all had paving-stones in their big, dirty hands, and were striking and shouting as they ran, 'All together.' If they had met a black man they would have torn him to pieces."

"How were they checked?"

"The National Guard was called out, and I saw it file down Macdougal Street and make it like a lane of steel. The stones flung by the mob struck a shower of sparks from the bayonets and the barrels of the muskets, but the Guard kept their tempers wonderfully. Only two Sundays before there had been a riot between negroes and whites at the Chatham Street Chapel. In fact, there have been so

many riots my friend, you would think rioting was the solid business of the city."

"We have heard little or nothing of these things. You can understand that at the White Sulphur Springs abolition was an unmentionable subject," said Virginia. "I think it would have been a brave man who would have spoken the word in the presence of those proud Virginians and Carolinians. But there was considerable talk about a Dr. Graham, and some new way of grinding flour which he proposes. It was said that Boston ladies were at daggers' points about it, and that the longest friendships had been broken on the subject of Dr. Graham's bread."

"Speaking generally, that is perhaps true. The daily bread has been a daily fight in many families. In Newburyport, Dr. Graham's opponents went from door to door, showing specimens of his execrable compound of bran and brickbats."

"That was not fair, Mr. Keteltas, unless they let Dr. Graham make and bake the bread."

"Well, my dear, perhaps so. But if the Bostonians take to Graham bread, they have consolations. My clerk was in Boston early in August, and he saw a cargo of plover from Cape Cod landed there; fine, full-breasted birds, sold at a penny apiece. Now even a toast of Dr. Graham's bread could be eat with

a broiled plover on it, eh, my dear? But I suppose you had Andrew Jackson to season all conversation with?"

Virginia laughed. "Mr. Keteltas, how many lives would have saved my father if he had expressed his opinion of the President to those fiery South Carolinians? I assure you, fifty would not have lasted him through the summer."

"Could not talk of abolition, nor of Jackson! What else, then, but Graham bread? Was it the staple?"

"Oh, no! Our talk was of horses—and Texas."

"Texas! I dare be bound. Colonel Austin is back there."

"And Sam Houston is going! There was great excitement at the Springs on the Texas subject. It is said the President quietly encourages the Americans. We spoke of him, however, as 'the Government.'"

"I have not the least doubt the President encourages the Texans. Anything that promises a fight will be indorsed by Andrew Jackson. The United States Bank will be under his feet soon; and he is getting another fight ready. Why cannot he let the Mexicans alone?"

"Come, come, Mr. Keteltas! why cannot the Mexicans let the Americans alone!"

"Let it pass. I will not talk on the subject.

I have had trouble enough this summer on it. My Harry is Texas-mad, and, instead of sticking to his concordance, he is filling his mind with Stephen Austin and Sam Houston. If men are to bring up sons, the Lord Almighty ought to let fathers order the kind they can manage. Harry is going to be a runaway minister. I feel it."

"My dear Mr. Keteltas, we must not discourage men who are carrying freedom into the great West."

"I suppose not, even if they are Mormons. Speaking of their colony, let me tell you it is going to pieces. They are getting discouraged with Joe Smith. He promised to save his followers from the cholera, and he cannot do it. They are dying miserably in great numbers, and a still greater number are deserting. It has been a strange summer, full of unhappy incidents. Only last month all the stonecutters in New York were on the riot because the stone for the university is being cut by the convicts at Sing Sing."

"Well, I know not the right and wrong of that subject, Mr. Keteltas."

"Simply this: has the Government the same right as individuals to buy in the cheapest market? But we had another riot last month, whose right you understand very well—the Irish and the Americans have been fighting again. It was mostly confined to the Five

Points district, but might have been very serious."

"That quarrel is a standing one, always ready to lift. What provoked it?"

"The Irish began to raise an Irish regiment to be called the O'Connell Guards, and the Americans would not let them do it."

"Very proper. What do we want with Dan O'Connell here? We have American patriots in plenty to name American regiments after."

"I think, father, we were well out of these troubles. Have you heard from Jane lately, Mr. Keteltas?"

His face clouded suddenly, and he hesitated a moment. "I do not know whether I have heard from Jane or not. I can scarcely believe Jane would write me letters so gloomy and dissatisfied. She must be sick, or under a spell, for she is not herself. I was in hopes you had something pleasant to tell me about the girl; thought perhaps you would go and see her when you were so far south."

"I did think of it, sir, but, as you know, Mr. Forfar does not like me."

"You liked Jane once."

"I love Jane yet, sincerely."

There was a painful pause, a certain stiffness and hesitation. John Paul sighed heavily, and rose. "I will see you to-morrow about business, Major. It is on a better footing, I am happy to say. Jackson is pulling down our

great financial temple, but Americans are not Philistines. I think we shall crawl out of the ruins with nothing worse than a few bruises. Good-afternoon."

He went away rather sadly, and Virginia said: "I have a letter from Jane in my pocket, father, but I have not yet read it, and I could not bring myself to name it to Mr. Keteltas."

"It was wiser and kinder not, until you knew what you had to read. I am very tired, Virginia. Excuse me if I go to my room until to-morrow. For then I shall need all the strength I have; many things will call for my strictest attention."

It was then three o'clock in the afternoon, and Virginia, left to her own devices, talked some time with Nelly about the household, and then, in a rather listless fashion, took Jane's letter from her pocket. She lifted her brows slightly at its length, for she had grown a little tired of Jane's monotonous grievances; not that she had lost interest in whatever interested her friend, but she was weary of giving nothing but words. For the troubles we can practically help do not wear out our sympathy; it is trouble which we must passively see, or hear of, that exhausts compassion.

But this letter of Jane's struck a different key in its very opening: "Virginia, my dearest friend, help me! Help the innocent and op-

pressed out of what is worse than death! There is only you—you only, to do it!" When she had read thus far, Virginia's whole attitude had undergone a transformation. She sat straight up, and there was the reflection of a soul thoroughly attent on her fair, serious face. She hastily scanned the letter, and then went back and read it slowly word by word; horror, anger, ineffable pity springing into her large eyes, and covering her cheeks with a burning blush of sympathy.

When she was thoroughly mistress of the situation which Jane had vividly described, she stood up, and stood still a few minutes, thinking rapidly over the course she ought to take. In the first place, she was sure it would be imprudent to tell her father. His assistance could be certainly predicted; he would shield the boys with his own life, if it were necessary. But she remembered the transparent pallor of his face, his increasing feebleness, his passionate partisanship, and there was no telling into what trouble such an interference with the law might bring him. She thought with terror of the mobbing and burning of the Tappans' house for a less matter; and it did not seem right to involve her sick father in so serious a quarrel.

Then who? Jane's own father was surely the right person to interfere. Would he? That was very uncertain. But she must at

least give him the opportunity to do so. There was also no time to be lost. The slave hunter would follow the letter very quickly; an hour's delay might be fatal. She did not wait for a carriage, but went with rapid steps to the Keteltas house. John Paul was, as she expected, in his garden. He had put on a homespun suit and a large straw hat, and was busy raking up the first fall of the maple leaves. When he saw Virginia he turned white, and waited for her to approach him.

"Well, my dear, what do you want?"

"Come into the house, Mr. Keteltas; I want you."

He followed her without a word. He felt there was trouble, and no one argues with that call.

She read him the letter all through, slowly and carefully, lifting her eyes very often to note what influence it had on him. She could see nothing. His face was white and speechless as a sheet of blank paper. He did not make a single remark, until she asked:

"What will you do, Mr. Keteltas?"

"Nothing, my dear. Jane does not ask me to interfere. She knows me better."

"But these two poor boys?"

"I think for my daughter. I am sorry for the boys; but my daughter is my daughter—and my duty. I cannot serve both."

"Oh, yes!"

"Oh, no; I tell you, I will not interfere between a man and his wife—never! And also, when that wife is my own daughter. I will say to her—'Think as your husband thinks; do as your husband does.'"

"If he thinks cruelty, wrong, robbery of freedom, yes, of life? If he thinks theft and murder?"

"My dear, you must talk reason to a reasonable old man. These boys are legally Nigel's slaves. Or else they are free men. If they are free, they must show their free papers. If they are not free, they must not rob their owner of their lawful service."

"Lawful service!"

"My dear, your scorn and anger is very pretty, but it is not papers and proofs. I am a good citizen. I will obey the laws. I am a father. I love my Jane more than my life, so I will not help her to disobey her husband, who is to her the manifestation of the law. Now, my dear, that is all I have to say about those two runaway slaves."

"I am sorry I told you."

"Yes, I am sorry too. Jane did not send you to me."

"At least you will say nothing to any one?"

"It is not my business to say anything. I wish not to the boys any evil. I cannot see it to be my duty to help them; nor yet to be my

duty to injure them. I will think I have dreamed all you have read to me and all you have said to me. Now we are awake, and we will talk of some other thing."

"I cannot talk of any other thing, Mr. Keteltas."

"Well, then, my dear, we will say 'good-afternoon'; and I shall be glad to see you when we can have again our nice talks about the birds and the flowers. Come into the garden; I will show you my last rose. It was so beautiful a week ago! Then I admired it. But now, my dear, when it is slowly fading and dying, it has to me a far truer beauty. It said to me an hour ago—'*Farewell, John Paul! I shall go away on to-night's chill wind.*' Then I loved my rose, and I stooped down and kissed it, and its fragrance—which is its soul, my dear—was nearly gone. I got the least atom on my lips."

He was talking thus with a real and not a simulated affection as he led Virginia into the garden. She looked at him angrily. "I have not time to think of roses, Mr. Keteltas; my heart is full of those two boys. If I only knew who to go to, how to save them!"

He saw the tears in her eyes, and he felt that she was at least asking him for advice, but he answered coldly:

"I cannot tell you who to go to. I cannot tell you how to save any one. My dear, go

home and look after your own good father. I will take leave to say he is not looking as well as he might be."

As she hastily retraced her steps the public clocks struck four, and she turned heartsick at the sound. The hours were flying, and nothing done. Nelly met her with a face all sympathy and loving reproof. "You should hev sent me, Miss, on any message you hed. I think I could hev managed it."

Then Virginia looked into her bright, strong face, and thought, "Why not? I am sure she can manage it." She called Nelly into her room, made her sit down, and read her Jane's letter. There was no chill of caution in this listener, and no want of that upright, downright sympathy which defies all reasoning with.

"I niver heard tell, in all my life, of such a bit of wickedness. It beats t' devil all to pieces. I'll go and tell them two poor lads to get out of t' way. I'll go this várry minute, if you say so, Miss."

"But where must they hide themselves?"

"Well, I should say t' 'Arethusa' would be a first-rate place."

"Oh, Nelly! is the 'Arethusa' in port? Are you sure?"

"Well, Miss, she was yesterday; and I doan't think she will be ready to sail until tomorrow; maybe the next day after. I saw the captain last night. I was standing at t' gate

watching for John Thomas, and he comes past here. And I dropped him a courtesy, and told him I was looking for you home and partic'lar glad of it. And he smiled till you'd hev thought it was fair sunshine, and so went down Broadway, varry quick like."

While Nelly had been speaking, Virginia had been thinking. "Nelly, neither you nor I can manage this business, but Captain Bradford can. Will you go to the 'Arethusa' for me?"

"To be sure I will. I'll put on my bonnet right away. What shall I say to him?"

"I will write to him, Nelly."

"That will be a deal better, Miss. I should be sure to say too much or too little. And 'tis such a strange story, he might think I were just making it up."

"He would never doubt your word, I am sure, Nelly."

"I doan't swear to that, Miss. Men are mostly infidels; you may happen make them see what you could niver make them believe."

CHAPTER XIII.

READY TO PERISH.

"Then spake the Lord—'We are not four, but five;
"He who protects" is here.'"

"Nor lies the babe nearer the nursing place,
Than Allah's smallest child to Allah's grace."
—*Rosary of Islim.*

". . . . hide the outcasts—bewray not him that wandereth. Let my outcasts dwell with thee . . . . be a covert to them from the face of the spoiler."—Isaiah xvi. 3, 4.

AT that same hour Captain Bradford was on the deck of his ship giving orders about the bestowal of certain pieces of cargo. He was tired and a little cross. Nothing but the sameness of every-day duty had come into his life since the memorable events connected with the election. When he next reached New York, June was nearly half over, and Virginia and the Major had left the city for a summer at the White Sulphur Springs.

Jack also was very busy, and Marius saw little of him. Perhaps he did not greatly miss his brother at this time. It was a trial to listen to him when the talk turned upon Virginia, as it was sure to do. He could not quite forget

how naturally Jack had gone with her to the piano, and how finely their voices had mingled. True, she had shown him great favor, but that might be because he was Jack's brother. So the June visit to New York, though he had hoped something from it, brought nothing. He did not even see Nelly. In August things had been equally unpropitious. The Mason house was deserted. Jack seemed dull and preoccupied, and little inclined to talk of them. The weather was frightfully hot, and the riots had made the city very unpleasant. He scarcely left his ship.

It was the close of September when he arrived again. He had every reason to believe the Masons would have returned; he hoped Jack and he might come to some better understanding about them. The weather was now cool and enchanting, and the city full of renewed hope and life. His spirits rose when he reached Broadway. He walked north as far as the Masons' residence, but he saw no one that night. As soon as he returned to the "Arethusa," he heard Jack calling him. They met with all their old frank affection, and as soon as they began to smoke Jack said:

"Marius, I am engaged to be married."

A great roaring came into the ears of Marius. His heart thumped against his breast. He felt as if all the springs of life had suddenly sunk deeper than the deepest bed of ocean.

Then he knew no more until he found himself on his bed, and felt that brandy was being poured down his throat. He struck the glass away, and slowly raised himself. His first mate and Jack stood by his side. A kind of anger came into his heart and strengthened him; then he made a mockery of his womanish weakness, rose hastily, and said, "Come, Jack, let us finish our pipe."

The mate thought he had been working too hard, and Jack readily accepted this idea. "You should not do so, Marius. I have heard father regret just the same waste. Last time I saw him he said, 'O that I had the strength I wasted when I was a young man!'"

"Never mind my strength, Jack. I guess it will last my task out. You are engaged to be married? How long since?"

"More than a month ago."

"But she was not in New York then?"

"No; I went to see her."

"Is her father satisfied?"

"Yes; pretty well. Her mother says we are too young. Carrie is little over sixteen."

"Her mother? Carrie? Who do you mean, Jack? Miss Mason has no mother."

"I am not speaking of Miss Mason. I gave her up last May. She was so cold and unsympathetic! A young man cannot throw his love away on a marble statue. I went to see her one night about three weeks after the election,

and as long as I talked of it, and of you, she was pleasant as sunshine. But when I tried to turn the conversation upon my own feelings, she evaded the subject, until I forced her to listen. Then she was—well, not at all as you would wish your future wife to be. I made up my mind that night to care no more about her."

"Having once loved her, Jack, how could you cease to love her?"

"If a girl does not care for me, why should I care for her? The very next night I met Carrie Cushing. She was just from school, and sweet and pretty as a flower. She says she fell in love with me as soon as she saw me; and I am sure I did with her. Carrie is Mr. Cushing's only child; she gets all she wants, and it is a very happy thing for me that I have won her favor."

"You are a lucky fellow, Jack, and what you have said makes me very happy also."

"I should have told you when you were here in August, but I was not quite sure then. Say, Marius, what time is it? I promised Carrie to be there at five o'clock."

"Then you had better hurry, dear boy, *Jack!*" and the single word was so full of affection that the young man could not resist its power. He threw his arms across his brother's shoulder, and kissed him with the same demonstrative frankness he had done when he was ten years old.

Left alone, Marius permitted himself to give way to the physical weakness which had been induced by Jack's phantom blow. He scarcely yet felt able to grasp the blessed thought that he might now love freely, love without any drawback, love without any sense of wrong or selfishness. But gradually the strength of this position comforted him. Hope, that ever new fine wine of life, made his heart glad; he lifted up his face as he had not done for many months. He was just beginning to think it possible to call upon Major Mason and Virginia, when he was sensitive to some presence behind him. He turned and saw Nelly Haworth.

"Why, Nelly!"

"I hev brought thee a letter, Captain. Miss Mason sent it, or I wouldn't hev come near t' 'Arethusa.' Will ta read it, and send me back as soon as iver ta can?"

He took the letter from her hand, and trembled with fear and joy as he did so. His eyes ran all over the few eager words in a moment:

Captain Bradford:

I am in a great perplexity. There is a cruel wrong to be done; will you help me to prevent it?

Your friend,

VIRGINIA MASON.

He flushed scarlet with the honor done him. He could scarcely write the few words neces-

sary to answer her. They seemed so cold and formal an expression of all that was in his heart. But he bid Nelly hurry back with the message, and promised to follow it in half an hour.

It was then after five, and when he reached the Mason house it was dark. Virginia met him as he entered, and, holding his hand, led him into the parlor. She was under strong excitement. For an hour she had been walking about the room, wondering how she was to explain the shameful incidents to Captain Bradford. When she saw him she brought him to the lighted candles, and put Jane's letter into his hand.

"Read it, every word," she said.

Her voice was low, but tremulous with feeling, and Marius, glancing first into her face, began to read. Standing by his side she watched him—watched the gradual knitting of his brows, the setting of his mouth, the flaming of the rising passion into his eyes and cheeks. As he finished the infamous tale he slowly gathered the paper between his strong hands and crushed it together. The action was involuntary. He did not know he had done so until Virginia touched his hands.

"I would crush the tenfold villain to atoms!" he said.

"The boys though, Captain! That is the first thought. Will you help me to save them?"

"As gladly as if they were my own brothers. I will go at once."

"Their probable lodging is named in that letter." She took the crushed paper from him, and began to straighten it out with her beautiful hands. He could scarce refrain himself from kissing them. He did touch them, and felt as if he had touched some spring of wondrous bliss.

"Here it is—33 Spruce Street. I shall leave all to you. Have you any idea what must be done?"

"They must be taken to England. The 'Arethusa' can take them."

"Do you sail to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, at four o'clock. But I can make it later if necessary."

"Then I shall not see you again." There was a loving trouble in her eyes; a longing sadness in her voice. It made him tremble with hope and love.

"But I will not doubt. You will do everything that is possible; the boys are truly no charge of yours—but, if I may call you 'friend,' save them for my sake."

Control, repression, restraint were no longer possible. He flung them behind his back. He looked with shining eyes straight into her eyes, he took her hands in his hands, and said, with a strong, sweet potency:

"Not for your sake, my love. Not for your

sake, but for the sake of Justice and Mercy and Eternal Right, I will save the boys, if I give my life to do it. I would be a craven, cowardly, cruel hound not to save them. But, oh, Virginia! give me your love for Love's own sweet sake. I am not worthy——"

"You are most worthy."

"I am poor."

"You are rich."

"I am lowly born."

"You are noble by birth."

He drew her close to him and whispered, "What then, oh, loveliest and sweetest?"

She could not escape his beaming eyes, his bending face, his encircling arms, the spirit of compelling love that pervaded him. She went to the heart that claimed her. He felt her arms around his neck, her cheek against his cheek, her lips whispering on his lips the divinest music mortals ever hear.

He was in a rapture, and all impossible things were then possible to him. For a few moments heaven and earth had met. He had the token in his soul of a love which bound him to immortality. They were both so blissful that they wept as full souls weep, a happy rain that kisses turned to smiles.

It would have been hard to part, if Duty—not severe, but strong and pleasant of aspect—had not said, "The clock strikes seven. There is work to be done, and you must be about it."

"You will write and tell me all, dearest Marius?"

"John Thomas will bring you word. I shall need some one that I can rely on. If I do not get the boys to-night, I cannot leave my ship very well to-morrow. But John Thomas is sufficient. Tell Nelly to send him to the 'Arethusa' at daybreak. If she talks to him to-night, he will be in a proper mood for any slave-hunter to-morrow. But I hope to have the boys on the 'Arethusa' in an hour's time. My darling, write me a letter, and send it to me to-morrow."

She smiled her promise, and then fled away to a dreamful, happy solitude; while Marius walked with purposeful strides to 33 Spruce Street.

It was a large boarding-house, and he was readily shown to an attic room with a shelving roof and dormer windows. Alexander, the elder boy, was absent. Stephen sat at a table writing. He was slightly deformed—one of those seraphic-looking hunchbacks who are old when they are born, and who have a nature too fine and high for mortal usage. He was writing a hymn, and heaven was in his upturned gaze.

When Captain Bradford entered, he sprang to his feet. The haunting terror of his life seized him in a moment, and he was not able to throw off his suspicion at once.

Marius took both his hands firmly and gently, and said, "Have no fear, Stephen; I come as your true friend. Where is Alexander?"

"He went to Flushing, on business, this afternoon."

"But he is coming home to-night?"

"Not until to-morrow?"

"What time to-morrow?"

"It may be noon. It may be later. It depends upon the orders he took out there. What is the matter, sir? Are we in danger?

"I fear so, Stephen—in great danger. In fact, there is no time for delay." Then he gave him Jane's letter, and the boy comprehended in a few moments the position. He rose trembling, and deathly white with terror.

"What is to be done?" he said. "What is to be done, sir? I mean, how is Alexander to be warned? Where shall we go?"

"I am the captain of an English ship. I will take you on board to-night. You are safe there."

"But my brother, sir? I cannot leave my brother."

"At daylight I will have a man to watch for him, to warn him, and tell him where you are, and how to reach the ship. Can you trust me, Stephen?"

He rose and looked searchingly into the captain's face, and the clear gray eyes met his

dark, glowing ones with such strong and loving intelligence that the boy answered promptly, "I can trust you fully. I will go with you now." He was putting on his coat as he spoke.

"Stop a moment. Write a letter to your brother, and leave it on the table."

"That man Wilkins is sure to come here. He would take it."

"You are right. Do not fear, I will manage to warn him, I will surely save your brother. Come."

They went out together into the warm, starlit night—the strong handsome man and the lad, slight, pale and crippled. Stephen stepped slowly. He was praying as he went, and the Captain was conscious of a Presence, greater than any mortal, walking with them.

"He will give his angels charge concerning thee," muttered the boy; and Marius walked, never thought of hurrying, and had no fear of molestation. They were encircled by an atmosphere that was stronger than a rampart. No man approached them; several crossed over to the other side. It was like walking in a vision,—and the sailors laughing with their sweethearts, and the people passing to and fro, seemed outside of the world they moved in.

When they stepped on board the "Arethusa," Marius turned to Stephen and said, with a sharp kindness:

"Go down into the ship. You are free. Thank God for it!"

So far all was well, but he was troubled at missing the boy Alexander. His return was so uncertain, and John Thomas would only be able to identify him by Stephen's description. He had not a high opinion of the Yorkshireman's native cleverness in such emergencies, though he knew he could rely on his courage. After all, Nelly's intuition might have been better.

At daylight John Thomas boarded the "Arethusa," and Nelly was with him. She was to bring back any information there was to send, and she was the bearer of a letter from Virginia to the Captain. It was her first love letter to him. He dismissed every other thought, and fled like a boy to his cabin with it. And blessed above all men he thought himself when his heart came at last and alone into its warm secret foldings. He gave himself one half-hour's joy, and then, with his answer ready for Nelly, went back to the salon.

Stephen was talking with Nelly and John Thomas. He had described his brother so fully that Nelly declared she could pick him out of a hundred. but John Thomas only scratched his head and wondered. Nelly looked at him impatiently, and turned to Marius—"Captain, I'll look after John Thomas mysen."

"If she'll nobbut point t' lad out to me, I'll see as nobody hurts him, Captain."

"Then I will trust you, Nelly. After noon, I cannot leave the ship. If I did, I would not have men enough to sail her. Now, mind! The 'Arethusa,' lifts her anchor at four o'clock. You must have the boy here, by that time, Nelly."

"If he is in town, Captain."

"And if not, what then, sir?" It was Stephen who spoke, and Marius could not bear the anguish in his long, thin, white face.

"I will wait for him, Stephen. It cannot be longer than twelve hours. The 'Arethusa' will not be ready until Alexander is aboard her. Now then, Stephen!"

He followed Nelly and John Thomas on deck, walked to the end of the wharf with them, and again gave the man his instructions. He answered, "Aye, aye, sir," but he turned to Nelly, as soon as the captain was out of hearing, for his final orders.

"What does ta think of all this, Nelly? It is a mixy-maxy business. If they'd take my notion about it, they'd let me go for that hound Wilkins. I'd pummel him that well, he wouldn't be able to move out of his bed for a week or two."

"Of course you would. Now, forget iverything Captain Bradford said to you, and do just as I say. Go to 33 Spruce Street, and

stay round there till one o'clock. Ivery time the clock strikes, ask if Mr. Forfar hes come home, ana as soon as he does, give him his brother's letter. When he is ready to run, keep at his side till he steps on the 'Arethusa.' If ta lets any man stop him, thou stops thy awn wedding—that's all about it."

"I'm none such a fool."

"If he hesn't come home to 33 Spruce Street by one o'clock—and men are thet contrary I'm sure he won't hev—then go to Job Parker's store, 63 William Street, and watch round there till thou either sees him or me. I'll be along about two o'clock to see thou does thy duty."

"I'm sure thou needn't."

"If ta sees Wilkins—and surely to goodness, thou can't mistake such a blackguard—keep thy hands off him till I get there. Then I'll give thee leave to do as ta likes with him."

These instructions seemed clear enough to Nelly, but she was doubtful of John Thomas blundering them. Virginia shared her anxiety. "Do not wait a moment, Nelly," she urged. "Go and direct John Thomas."

"I am far better not there, ma'am, till the young man comes home; and I'm sure by his brother's words and looks he'll niver get near New York till afternoon." But at twelve o'clock Nelly started down town, and found John

Thomas at the post assigned him. He had stood there all morning, "making himsen," as Nelly said, "a laughing-stock and a wonder-post for ivery one as lived near at hand."

"The landlady has told me three times that Mr. Forfar won't be home till dark; so, ta sees, he willn't get on the 'Arethusa' by four o'clock."

"Won't he? Thou shall see he will. Now, then, if t' landlady didn't expect him till dark; then it's nearly sure he goes straight from t' boat to t' store he works at. And anybody but a fool might hev known that, when he's been collecting money. Come, let's off to William Street. Why didn't ta bring thy kit of tools, and look as if ta had some business of thy awn in hand?"

"New York is such a moidering place. I allays feel as if I hed lost my mind in it. I niver get used to it."

"That's the way with English folk. They are easy to tell in a foreign country. They doan't seem to hev any knack of making themsens at home. Look at that Irish beggar! You'd swear he felt as if a good deal of New York was all his awn. Here! Hold on a bit! That is Wilkins, I'll be bound for it. Look at his face; it is the varry color of tobacco—and the big hat over it! He may well hide it—a worse-looking scoundrel I niver saw, I'm sure!"

"There is a man with him."

"That will be an officer of some kind, and one kind is meaner than another."

"Well, young Forfar isn't at 33 Spruce Street, and I'm varry sure he isn't in Job Parker's store: for we hev passed twenty times, and there is nobody like him in it."

The two men went direct to Parker's store, and they remained there for more than an hour. Then they walked to Spruce Street, made an inquiry, and returned. During this interval, Parker himself came frequently to the store door, and looked anxiously up the street. Nelly felt sure he was watching for Alexander, and that he desired to warn him, if he could. It was evident, then, that he had not yet returned. Soon after three, Wilkins and his companion again went to Spruce Street, and Nelly felt as if this was the lad's opportunity.

"If he would nobbut come!" said Nelly impatiently; and with the words Alexander turned into the street. But Nelly's face was the other way, and she did not see him until he was going into the store. When she reached the door, he was just handing Parker some papers and a package of money. Nelly went straight to him, and her face and manner, and the letter she pushed into his hand, made him all attention in a moment.

"Fly, my lad!" she whispered. "English packetship 'Arethusa.' Stephen is on her, safe! Wilkins, of Memphis, looking for thee.

Fly! fly! Thou hesn't a minute to save thysen in!"

The emergency was one ever present to the poor boy's mind. He glanced at his master, and received a movement of warning. He tore open Stephen's note. It said only; "The 'Arethusa!' Fly to her! Fly for your freedom! We are waiting for you."

He threw off his coat, and went bareheaded to the door. As he reached it, Wilkins and the sheriff's assistant faced him.

"John Thomas!" screamed Nelly, "make these fellows let me alone," and in an instant John Thomas had thrown himself between Nelly and Wilkins, and he was hitting out with both hands very cleverly. It was a moment or two before the men could disengage themselves from the unexpected attack, and that grace was seized by Alexander; so that he was nearly a block ahead ere they could follow. But the odds were vastly against him. Wilkins's shout of "A rescue! Fifty dollars for the runaway!" soon sent a score of men after him. And the hunters increased at every step.

"Fifty dollars!"

"Stop thief!"

"Runaway nagur!"

"One hundred dollars for him!"

"Knock him down!"

"Fling a brick at him!"

"A hundred and fifty dollars!"

And every moment the crowd increased behind him; and every moment the likelihood of being stopped by some one in front was greater. Windows were flung open, brutal women shouted and laughed, little children's shrill halloing increased the clamor. Thank God! the river at last! There was a fiercer shout! a last run for liberty! In another moment the "Arethusa" was in sight. Her ensign beckoned him. He was on her wharf. Her captain was lifting his cap and cheering him. There was a cry from Stephen that gave him fresh strength. He leaped on board, he grasped Stephen's outstretched hands, he flung his arms around him.

The crowd was pressing hard after. The sheriff and Wilkins leaped on the deck. The officer was approaching his prisoner. Instantly the captain was before the boys. "Off, sirs!" he cried. "I will fling the first dog-of-a-man into the river who touches a passenger of mine!"

"He is a runaway slave."

"He is as free as you are. Mr. Lewis, show the flag, sir!" As he spoke there was a movement and a shout, and out flew the British flag. "This is a British bottom, sir. On this deck a slave cannot breathe."

He stepped loftily aside then, as if daring their attempt. The two boys stood by the

mainmast. Alexander's right arm was thrown before his brother; his left was lifted to the flag that drooped downward toward them. The eyes of both were yet full of terror, but they were raised with hope and imploration to the bit of bunting that was their friend and their salvation.

"The boys are mine," said Wilkins. "I will have my property." Then, turning to the crowd, who were talking and shouting on the wharf, he cried out to them: "Gentlemen! help me to my own!"

"Mate, pull in the gangway. Donald, up with the anchor."

"Nothing of the kind! Gentlemen, hold on to the gangway!"

"Mr. Lewis, throw it overboard."

In a moment the gangway was hanging from the hands of two men on the wharf. Then he turned to Wilkins. "You are on your way to Liverpool. If any man will give you a berth for love or money you can have it. Dare not to come into my presence. In Liverpool take the boys—if you can get them."

There was a great cheer from the passengers and sailors on the "Arethusa." A cheer also, mingled with laughter, from the crowd on the wharf. Success is the idol of the mob—the victor in any dispute is always right.

The packet was now going down the river quickly enough to insure the boys' safety. In the main, it was watched with pleasure.

"The poor lad has won his freedom; let him have it!" cried one.

"He was a good-looking boy," sighed a big Irish woman. She was thinking of her own sons.

"And he run like a red deer," said a tall Scotchman, who had kept close to Alexander's side. "Let me tell you, it wud ha'e ta'en a braw man to catch the laddie. I wadna ha'e suffered it. I said to mysel', let him win his ain freedom if he can; if he canna, then, John McGregor will win it for him. I wad ha'e knocked the first man down that put finger on him."

"Give the captain a cheer! He did right! Give him a cheer!" And the crowd fixed their eyes on the man standing yet with defiance midship, his strong voice ringing out orders, his gallant ship answering them with outswelling sails.

Virginia heard from John Thomas that night the whole triumphant transaction, for John Thomas had kept very close behind the fugitive; and the next morning there was a full account of it in the "Sun." She read it with pride and enthusiasm to her father, but the Major listened with an equanimity that seemed almost cruel.

"Captain Bradford will get himself into trouble if he does not mind."

"I think he did quite right."

"We are permitted to *think* as we wish; but *actions* have wider responsibilities, and Providence has ordered——"

"My dear father, whenever people want to say a severe thing they bring in Providence. How can we help suffering with the slave, and honoring men who succor those ready to perish? They are the Greathearts of their generation."

"Such men are thinly sown, Virginia. I have not met many of them. They are widely scattered."

"True; but they know each other, and, afar off, salute."

CHAPTER XIV.

BAD AT BEST.

"He who beateth his slave without fault, his atonement for this is freeing him."

"A man who behaveth ill to his slave will not enter Paradise."

"Him whom God hath ordained to be the slave of his brother, his brother must not order him to do anything beyond his power; and if he doth order such a work, he must himself assist him in doing it."

"Forgive thy servant seventy times a day."

—*Laws of Mohammed.*

IT was about ten weeks after this event—a misty, chill evening in December—when Mr. Joe Wilkins again saw the city of Memphis. His long absence had given Forfar much anxiety, but the subject was one he did not care to speak of to his neighbors. There was, indeed, a kind of *esprit de corps* among slave owners which forbade the discussion of the most objectionable features of "the institution," and even punished with social ostracism those who flaunted them in the public eye.

Communication between New York and Memphis was then roundabout, and not par-

ticularly frequent. The New York "Herald" was in its babyhood, and did not push inquiries and information into all the dark and lonely places of the Union; and though all the daily papers of the great city noticed the carrying off of Wilkins and the officer, it was not likely that any of these papers reached Memphis, and the affair was not further commented on, and was soon forgotten.

But Nigel was both anxious and angry. He believed Wilkins had obtained possession of the boys, carried them to New Orleans, and, with their price in his pocket, gone to the new land of plenty and promise called Texas. He remembered how enthusiastic Wilkins had been on the subject, and as week after week passed away this conviction became in his mind a settled one. It made him tingle all over to be the dupe of such a man; but if he had been duped, those two boys had been sold, and he felt an infernal pleasure in the compensation.

For though his slave stepmother had ever recognized his right, and ever treated him with respect and kindness, he remembered the favors and the love given to her children as something taken from himself. He resented the relationship from his earliest conception of it, and his action after his father's death was simply the carrying out of a revenge he had promised himself for many years. And he had

an accommodating conscience; he counted up to it the money spent on educating those slave children, and was sure the price of their bodies would barely replace the sum taken from his patrimony; and his conscience accepted the calculation and was satisfied.

He was sitting on his hearth that December evening, busy with thoughts kindred to these, when Wilkins suddenly entered the room. Nigel looked at the man, and put his hand in his breast, but he did not speak.

"Friends! Captain," said the man, advancing, "you should hear a man before you speak in that way," and he touched on his own breast the pocket in which his derringer lay ready to answer.

"You might have written, Wilkins, if you conld not speak."

"I have been at sea ever since I touched New York. Is there any post-office there, sir?"

"Take a seat. Tell me what has happened. You got the boys?"

"No. I did not."

"What then?"

"I got to New York at midnight. I had the warrant for their arrest out by noon next day. I could not find the hunchback, but his landlady said he was sure to be in his room at three o'clock—he's actually going to school yet, sir—and the other sprig had been sent to Flush-

ing to collect money. His employer would have nothing to say to me, one way or the other; but, welcome or not welcome, I and an officer hung round the store waiting. The boy came back about half-past three. He knew me in a moment, and ran; and after fighting off a man and woman who tried to hold us, we ran after him. He fled straight as an arrow to a ship called the 'Arethusa,' and her captain jumped up England's interfering old flag, lifted his anchor, and put out to sea, with Joe Wilkins and a sheriff's officer on board."

"The 'Arethusa'?" screamed Nigel. "Captain Bradford?"

"The same, sir; and a more insolent tyrant is not on this planet, sir. What I suffered on that ship, sir, I'll never be able to tell. It was a hell on earth, or on water, which is far worse. But I'll take it all out of some nigger's hide yet. No bed, no victuals but what the cook threw to me, as if I was a dog—the scrapings of plates, sir! No whisky, my tobacco done the second day, sick as a dying dolphin, and wet through the most of the time. And them two boys, sir, parading up and down the quarter-deck with the captain and the best of the passengers! Give me some whisky, sir! I'm sick yet when I think of it."

Nigel passed the bottle but was unable to speak. His rage scorned the poor expletives of any human language he knew. He could

only finger the pistol in his breast, and think of murder.

"We had one storm on the top of another till we were nearly half over, and then we met a ship homeward bound. The captain of the 'Arethusa' told the officer with me that he would put him on her if he desired it; and, as he would have been the derndest fool not to desire it, I was left alone for the rest of the voyage. When we got to Liverpool, he said to me: 'Leave my ship—quick! If my boys take it into their heads to raise a mob and catch a slave-hunter, they will not leave enough of your body to carry your mean, contemptible soul back to Memphis.' He said that to me, sir; yes, he did."

"And you took it from him?"

"I could not help it, for he added: 'You had better go at once to a New Orleans packet. You'll find one six streets to the left.' I saw five or six of the sailors watching me, with very ugly faces, and I was glad to slip away as quietly as I could—off one ship and on to another; and may I be eternally flogged if ever I go to sea again. No, sir! Not for a galleon full of gold, such as my grandfather took under Lafitte."

"Captain Bradford! The 'Arethusa'!" It was all that Nigel could yet say, and he spit the words out as if they burnt his tongue. Wilkins amplified his story with one aggravat-

ing detail after another, drinking deeply as he talked, until he stumbled on to a couch and fell into a drunken sleep.

Then Nigel rose and trod the floor backward and forward to the measure and pace of his turbulent passions. His hatred of the boys, his contempt of Wilkins, his disappointment in his own revenge and profit—every feeling was lost in the tempest of rage that tossed his soul against Marius Bradford. After a while he was calmed sufficiently to reflect upon the subject, and the devil of suspicion drove out the devil of anger, and he began to try and discover how Captain Bradford knew of his intentions. He had told no one in Memphis of them. No one knew where Wilkins was going to, nor for what purpose. No one even knew that Wilkins was about his business. Not a word had been said on the subject, except in his own house—on the gallery that afternoon. A sudden thought came to him. Could Jane have heard? Or Palma? Palma could write.

He put away the thought of Jane as preposterous. It must have been Palma. He opened the doors to go up-stairs. Palma was in the hall. She had Wilkins's hat in her hand, and was looking at it when Nigel saw her. He walked quickly to the stand and lifted a horsewhip. "Prying again!" he hissed, and the whip fell with a terrible force across the girl's face and shoulders. She cowered and shud-

dered, but she did not scream. Even in her agony she remembered her mistress was yet weak and nervous, and she bore the stinging pain with patience.

When he had exhausted his passion, he spurned her with his foot, and went to his wife's room. There was only the blaze of firelight in it, and Jane sat on the hearth with her baby held close to her breast. She had been down to the gates of the grave, and come back with its pale, gray shadow on her face. But in her arms she had brought safely back, through all dangers, the pretty boy she was gently rocking and softly singing to. Nigel was very fond of his boy, and when Jane turned with a faint smile and lifted the child that he might kiss its rosy face, he could not find it in his heart to scold and bluster as he had intended.

She looked at him inquisitively; she saw that he was very much annoyed; but she had forgotten Wilkins at that moment. When she wrote to Virginia about Palma's brothers, she had told her, "Whatever was done, not to say anything in her letters about it. I may be very ill soon, Virginia; I may die. My letters may be opened by Nigel. If the boys are saved, put a leaf of sweet geranium in your next letter. If there is no leaf, I shall know my effort has failed." But the leaf had come—nay, two leaves had been sent; and from them Jane rightly divined both boys had been fortunate.

And so much had happened since, that the circumstance had faded somewhat in her mind. Any mother with her first babe, in her breast knows how the little face hides all other faces, and how its small, urgent needs put all other needs behind them. She talked of her baby till she saw a shadow on her husband's face—then she said :

"I am afraid something has angered you, Nigel."

He told her all, watching her countenance the while for any flitting expression that might feed the suspicion that lay at the bottom of his heart, though he would not acknowledge it.

Nothing did feed it. Jane's eyes were cast upon her child ; she uttered only those ejaculations of wonder or interest he had expected. For at the time the letter was written to Virginia, Jane had rehearsed the present scene too often to make any serious blunder when she had to play it. And Nigel could not bear to accuse her. She had been so ill, a relapse might kill her ; and he thought of his son without a mother, and of himself without a wife—yes, such thoughts do intrude—every one has them : horrible, selfish considerations, which the heart instantly repudiates. One question he did, however, ask : "Had she ever heard Virginia speak of Captain Bradford in a way which would imply a special friendship between them?" and Jane could truly answer, "that she

did not believe there was any friendship at all between them."

"Then it is Palma—or July," he said. "In some way they have overheard, or been told what Wilkins was going North for. Or Wilkins has been drunk, and talked; and if any negro heard him, they would find means to let Palma or July know."

"It would have been quite natural, if they were the girls' brothers."

But though Nigel had confessed to sending after the two runaways, he had not said a word of the relationship they held to him. And Jane was now trying to forget it. The baby had softened her heart to its father. And, indeed, she was too physically weak to feel any outside wrong very acutely. She had forgiven her husband; she had begun to love him anew. After all, she had not, perhaps, made consideration enough for his education and surroundings.

But she had not a moment's regret for having betrayed his intentions. She had prevented him committing a great crime; and she did not believe the intention of crime was as bad as its perpetration. At any rate, the wrong was checked with its projector—it had no evil consequences for others. If the boys were to save again, she would save them; yes, always, she must protest against a wrong, even if she could not prevent it. But it had been pre-

vented, and Nigel might never more be in such a dreadful temptation. He was very dear to her, and she must bear with him as he was until, by her love and tact, she could make him see slavery in its true relations.

These were the natural thoughts of a good woman whom God had permitted to return to life with a blessing in her hand. But as the force and strength of her years returned to her, it was more difficult for her to remember the vows of patience and forbearance and consideration she had made. For it was a time which had intensified feeling of every kind. The slaveholders burned with a sense of the injustice done them. They said they were defamed without any regard to the involuntary nature of their position, of its peculiarities, surroundings, and interests. They were sensitive to the interference with their domestic life; they felt, individually and nationally, all the indignation which men feel when their private characters are assailed and the members of their households tampered with. Between North and South there was the feeling which looks to lynch law, instead of common law, for redress. Nigel, who had always been a strict master, became a stern and then a cruel one. There was a similar change in every household, and the first movements of emancipation were doubtless full of suffering to the slave.

It was impossible for Jane to be quite

ignorant of such changes. They could be read in Palma's face and attitude. There was a certain look which Jane knew as well as a written bulletin—it said, "They have been flogging July again." There was often a shivering shrinking in her own movements which revealed her personal suffering. And Nigel was so cruel and so insolent to her that Jane watched the girl with fear and wonder. How could she bear to nurse and fondle the child of the man who so brutally wronged her? Might she not be planning some awful revenge for her own and July's injuries? She had a haunting terror about her little Paul, night and day. She would not have him a moment out of her sight. She awoke many times in a night with a scream, and a horrible fear which nothing but a visit to the child's cradle could satisfy.

Nigel resented this imaginary danger at first with contempt, finally with anger. She reminded him with shuddering anguish of little children in their own vicinity who had been made to pay the penalty of their father's or mother's cruelty, and he refused to judge the situation by "horrible exceptions." Still, no life is all at once and altogether wretched. There were many days yet when Jane was able to shut her eyes to the sin and sorrow around her, and enjoy the sunshine of Nigel's love. For love dies hard; it has a tenacity that resists conviction and cruelty, and, even when

all is apparently over, some spasms of lingering vitality almost simulate life, and lead hope to bring on fresh disaster and disappointment.

In a certain way Jane was also very popular in the neighborhood. Nigel was a strict observer of religious services, and a rather important pillar of the church which he patronized; and Jane's brightness and capacity made her invaluable in the organizing and carrying out of all the small theological schemes for getting money. It was said that "Mrs. Forfar could sing any pocket-book open"; and her fine cakes and charming bits of fancy-work were of great account in the tea-meetings and holy fairs of the locality. Nigel was always at his best during such hilarious occasions, and the pride he felt in his fair Northern wife did not quite evaporate for many days after.

Indeed, Jane was in a great many ways formed for society. Any party she ordered was a success; invitations to her own entertainments were eagerly sought. She was copied and quoted to such an excess that Mrs. Paget said, "Mrs. Forfar could do whatever she liked; it had become the fashion to praise her." Mrs. Forfar's attitude toward the Pagets had changed somewhat. As her circle of friends increased, she regarded them with contempt, and expressed her opinion by scornful but eloquent silences. Mrs. Paget and Imogene declared to Nigel that they

had been ruined in public opinion by his wife. But they were unable to make a single definite charge. Jane had said nothing, and she had done nothing, but yet the Pagets had become unfashionable, and were quietly dropped by many of the people whose favor was the very breath of their nostrils.

But wherever Jane went she took her baby. Ladies smiled, and supposed it was "the No'the'n way"; and Jane let it pass for that. She had many a quarrel with Nigel on this subject, but she held firm to one position—"If I go, baby goes; if baby stays at home, I stay at home also." Nigel's adamantine will simply fretted itself to pieces against this rock of mother love, and the baby always went or else Jane always stayed at home.

To Mrs. Paget he could speak of these trials with some freedom. She had known his mother, she had petted him all his life. She had expected him to marry Imogene, and she believed that he still loved her daughter. If Nigel was "out" with Jane, he was very much "in" with the Pagets; and whenever Jane was afar off in sympathy with him, then he found the fair Imogene particularly kind and gentle.

Out of such elements as these the evolution of almost any tragedy was possible; and Jane had often the feeling that she was but parrying off an inevitable fate. And as the hot weather

advanced again, her highly sensitive and nervous condition made every hour of every day a constant watch and warfare with herself. The child also was sick and fretful. It annoyed Nigel. It would not let him sleep at night. He declared its wakefulness was caused by too much sleep in the day, and he commenced a regular plan of hostilities against such an improper indulgence. If Paul was in the cradle, he lifted him out of it. If the child cried, as was most likely, he flung him into Palma's arms, with some irritable remark on its bad temper.

He nursed this petty wrong against his own night rest until it became a monomania with him to watch the poor infant and break its daylight slumbers, until it was an open quarrel with his wife, until the child's day-sleeps were matters of strategic arrangement, too often rendered useless by Nigel's almost omnipresent watchfulness. He had no other work to do; no living interest of any kind to occupy him; and this silly, cruel quarrel with his own infant and its nervous, impulsive mother became a matter of importance to him. He made a grievance of it. Men full of vital business, and driven throughout the day by momentous interests, men with brains alive and hands full, must conceive a human being occupying his mind and time in such a small barbarity a lunatic of the meanest kind.

But Nigel was the outcome of circumstances which left him hours and hours and days and weeks and years, in which he had nothing to do. Mr. Clay managed the estate. Mr. Bailey, his factor, managed his money matters. Abstract thought, scientific reading, he had no taste for. His culture was entirely superficial. His political ideas were on the wrong side, and were not strong enough to make him an energetic partisan in politics. He was shut up to his pipe and his nightly consultation with his overseer. Jane and her baby, in a pleasant mood, had ceased to be interesting; he felt the little excitement of a chronic quarrel with her to be more agreeable; and it gave him the further outlet of a faint, sighing complaint to the sympathetic Imogene.

One very hot afternoon, as the sun began to sink, Jane and Palma went quietly out of the house. Palma had little Paul in her arms. Their intention was to reach a small strip of pine wood on the outskirts of the garden, and rest there upon the fragrant, warm earth beneath the trees. Jane generally had a book or needle in her hand, but this afternoon she was under the depressing influence of malaria. She had no energy left. She had no hope left. She was consumed by a vague indifference to the present and a total despair as to the future.

It was an effort to drag herself through the

tawny, cruel sunshine; through the garden full of the heavy, hot perfume of Cape Jasmine—glinting with green lizards—exhaling lush, dense, depressing odors. But she felt better when she reached the pine strip; for if every soil makes its own tree, every tree also makes its own soil. And who does not love the pine earth—brown and smooth, and spread with a carpet of fragrant, thread-like leaves? There was no deep shade, only a beautiful gloom surrounded by light; a rarefied freshness that was almost a stir in the air. They sat down with a sigh of pleasure. There was no noise but the grating, mournful voices of the men and women in the fields; and they came there only as a soft tremulous sound. Paul watched the grasshoppers, and pulled the fungi growing around—satiny, bright as silver, smooth as silk, rainbow colored, sulphur colored, milk-white domes growing in fairy circles.

Jane watched him with an impassive, indolent, meditative air; Palma talked in baby fashion to the child, throwing some of the fungi away, but letting him fill his rosy hands with others. The drowsy atmosphere soon affected them; in a quarter of an hour they were all fast asleep. Jane awoke first. It was almost dark underneath the trees. She was frightened, and touched Palma, who sat up with an instant alertness. "Lift him gently, Palma. It is late: we must hasten home."

The Southern twilight, with its silver and purple stripes, its swirling bats, and damp, cloying mist, was all around them. Jane's clothing was quickly damp, and a strange depression fell upon her. She went forward listlessly, feeling her limbs too heavy to move, dragging them as if they were weighted. She had so walked in many a heavy dream.

"I will not go through the garden, Palma," she said, wearily. "I am afraid. It is quite dark among the shrubbery. There are all sorts of creeping things and flying things there—and there may be also snakes. We will go through the Quarters; it is not many steps further."

"No, no, Miss Jane. Do not go that way."

"But why?"

"Perhaps—it is picking time, Miss Jane; some one is sure to be short. Please, Miss Jane—not that way."

"I will go through the Quarters."

They went on silently a little longer. Jane breathed the hot, damp mist hardly, she threw off her sunbonnet, she tried to hurry but could not. The sun had quite gone, but they were at the edge of the Quarters. Suddenly there was a cracking, switching, lashing sound, and then a terrible cry in the darkness. Jane stood still, trembling from head to feet. Ere she could speak there was a repetition of the sound and of the cry. She turned her white face to Palma.

"It is Gabe. He is always short. His fingers are so stiff. He never can pick his task, unless some one helps him—and Mr. Clay measures very hard these times."

"Do you mean they are whipping a man for not picking a certain quantity of tobacco?"

"Yes, Miss Jane."

"Come on quickly. Carry the child to the house. Do not wait for me."

All the forces of her soul were in open revolt. She now walked quicker than Palma; walked straight to a pen of undressed logs at the end of the little street of cabins. The lash and the cry, the lash and the cry, followed each other as quickly as her steps. Ere she reached the place of torture, the man had paid the penalty for his short work; and the lash now called forth the shrill, sharp shriek of a woman. Twice it smote Jane's ear, and then she rushed into the pen.

A horn lantern stood on the earthen floor. There was a horrible smell of warm blood, and a far more horrible emanation of invisible spiritual influences—cruelty, human agony, and despair. A girl was standing against a strong post; the overseer had the whip raised above her. Nigel sat on the edge of a rude table, smoking and counting the strokes.

Jane took in every detail at a glance before any one was conscious of her presence. She was at that moment a valiant little woman,

who had no doubts of either God or herself, and, with the majesty of a soul strong in infinite pity and justice, she stepped swiftly to the overseer, and called in clear, peremptory tones:

"Stop, sir! Put down that whip!" and with the order she flashed into Clay's face a look he never forgot.

Then Nigel, stepping forward, said with a cold politeness, "If Madame interferes, Mr. Clay, that is sufficient. Go to your cabin, Celia." He then offered Jane his arm and led her toward the house. He never spoke to her, and for a few moments Jane could neither think nor speak. All her being was a storm of feeling. But long before they reached the house she had withdrawn her arm from her husband's and was walking proudly alone. He had to quicken his steps to keep up with her. As they entered the door the light in the hall showed her his dark face crimson with passion, and his eyes burning with a sullen fire.

"Go into the parlor; I wish to speak with you, Madame."

"I will never speak to you again, Nigel Forfar."

And at that hour she felt that it would be impossible for her to do so. She locked the door of her room and knelt down at her boy's cradle sobbing, blending with her sobs pitiful little prayers to God for help and comfort.

Palma watched her with a stony despair. "She asks help from one who never helps!" she muttered. But Jane knew better. The thought of what she might have to resign—of what she ought, perhaps to resign—filled her soul with the austere sweetness of sacrifice. And the music of an old promise rang like a bugle in her memory: "*Grace to help! Grace to help! Grace to help in every time of need!*" And she said it over and over, tasting the sweetness of it on her lips, until she became quiet and pacified.

Then she rose up, washed her face, and said, "Palma, get me some bread and coffee. To-night I shall sit up and think. I must go away from here. I will never speak to my husband again."

But circumstances have a power no one can resist, and that are beyond reasoning with. When Jane had drank her coffee and become calm, after she had sat silently musing about an hour, Nigel came to her room.

"Jane, I wish to speak to you. Unlock the door." Then, as there was no answer, "Your brother Harry is here."

She rose with a cry of gladness and was going down to him, but Nigel forcibly led her back. He motioned Palma away, and then said, "Jane, you have behaved very badly. You have grossly insulted me before my slaves. Your action will compel me to even greater

severity to them. Such exhibitions do no good."

Jane was silent.

"You know I love you. Yes, I do love you! Come, let Harry be peacemaker between us. I do not wish him to know——"

"I shall tell Harry everything, and ask him to take me back to father."

The threat sprang from her without consideration, but it was a powerful one. To stand well in the church and with his neighbors, that was Nigel's great ambition. To be talked about, to be made the subject of gossip in barrooms and paragraphs in newspapers, that was his terror. He grasped in a moment all the unpleasant social consequences of such a step, and Jane had him really at her feet. He kissed her fondly, he wooed her as he had scarcely done when she was a maiden. He reminded her that even God forgave those who were sorry for their fault, and in twenty minutes she had kissed his lips, and promised to come like a happy wife to see her brother.

But when Nigel left her presence there was an evil smile upon his lips, and he muttered sarcastically as he stepped softly from step to step:

"Well, well, if I have not the virtue to forgive as readily as Madame, I have at least the prudence to forget—as long as it suits me to do so."

CHAPTER XV.

INVINCIBLE LOVE.

"Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the law are of the Lord; Love and the way of good works are from him."—Eccles.

"Heart with heart, and hand in hand, go upon your way."

"Love makes little much, when our joys are few;
And when most, his touch gives them golden hue."

ABOUT the time Joe Wilkins reached Memphis again, Marius Bradford sailed the "Arethusa" into New York Bay. It was a cold, dull morning, with a pale gray light in the east, a pale gray sea around, and low-lying white mists about the shores. But Marius was above the horizon around him; he was on the mountain tops of Love and Hope, and had the sunshine in his heart.

Early in the afternoon he had brought his ship to anchor, and was ready to attend to his own affairs. He dressed with great care—a lover who does not do so is but a poor creature—and he was quite conscious that he was a handsome man, not only in the eyes of women, but also in the regard of men. For his sailors looked proudly at their captain as he stepped from his ship to the wharf; and standing still with their hands upon their hips, watched his

fine form out of sight. And the man could be read in his walk, which was quick and elastic, yet firm as that of one who steps from a high to a low place.

He went northward very rapidly, without turning his head to the right or the left, and about two o'clock knocked at the door of Major Mason's house. He had no irresolution and no timidity. Virginia had told him that he was beloved ; had promised to be his wife ; a perfect understanding was between them ; and a perfect love had cast out fear.

Lunch was over ; Major Mason was reclining in his chair, more than half asleep ; Virginia sat at a table copying the score of a new song she intended to send to Jane. The house was perfectly still ; the silence in the room so great that the slight movement of Virginia's pen made distinct impressions of sound. Suddenly some one touched the knocker ; the application was impulsive, was in reality the impetuous demand of a happy comer. The Major stirred lazily, and took his crimson bandanna from his face. Virginia turned her head to the door, and sat waiting with the pen poised in her hand.

In a moment she blushed vididly ; she dropped her pen, she stood upright, listening, waiting. For the echo of a voice, the echo of a step, had touched her senses with an instantaneous conviction. She did not speak, she

had scarcely time; the door opened, and Marius entered. His eyes fell upon Virginia; he saw no one else. Before a word could be spoken, he had taken her to his heart and kissed her.

The Major's pale face was like a flame. He stood up, the incarnation of angry amazement; and, stepping toward the lovers, separated them by a word and an authoritative motion.

"Captain!"

"It is my fault, dear father. I—I called him by—with a look—it is my fault."

"Major, it is my fault. I ought to have had better control. Sir, your daughter has done me the inconceivable honor to love me—to promise to be my wife."

"Virginia! and you never told me."

"It was my place, Major, to make the confession to you. I came at this hour to do so. It is the first opportunity I have had since the happiest hour of my life."

As he was speaking, Virginia quietly left the room, and the father and lover, unembarrassed by her presence, soon came to a gentlemanly discussion of the subject.

"But, indeed, there is nothing to discuss," said the Major, with a pathetic sadness. "If Virginia has given her heart to you, it is the idlest of forms to ask me for her hand; of course a necessary form, but—I was going to

say a few hard words, Captain. I will bury them in my own heart. I have just lost my daughter, sir; be patient with me. I have no one else."

"No, Major. You have not lost Virginia. She has loved me since we sailed together more than a year ago; has she therefore loved you less? Have you been sensible of any change? And why look for change now?"

"Yes, sir. She has loved me less. I have often been sensible of a change. If she was thinking of you, could she also be thinking of me? I tell you the heart has but one lord and master—lesser loves are many, but they give place to the one supreme love."

"It is the natural way, Major."

"The ways of nature are nevertheless extremely cruel, and hard to bear. So suddenly, too. Why did you not tell me? let me suspect?"

"I have seen Miss Mason but seldom; unto the very last hour of my last visit to New York, I hardly dared to let hope live."

"And then, in one hour, all doubt gone; and you claim the uttermost as your right? Impossible!"

"Major, through many days and weeks my ship keeps her nose to the sea. Sometimes it is fair weather and fair wind; but more often the blasts strike her sails with musketry, and her decks are washed by plunges of green

water. She takes the blows passively, and, with her head to harbor, doggedly pushes along; and then some hour the land is there, and the harbor made, and all is well. It was just so with my love for your daughter. Through days and weeks of doubt and despair I kept on loving; and then, when I was here last, there was a look, a word, that was like the cry of 'land in sight' to the sailor. I knew she loved me. I spoke—what man would not have spoken? And I made the loveliest heart-harbor that ever man found. When will you give Virginia to me?"

"Sir, you are too impetuous. You scarcely yet know the woman you would marry."

"I knew her the first moment we met."

"Lovers' hyperboles are not facts, Captain. I say you do not know Virginia. I say that Virginia does not know you. It is my duty to protect her when her own weakness would betray her to a foolish step." He touched the bell sharply, and remained silent until it was answered.

"Request Miss Mason to come here."

In a few minutes Virginia answered the summons. She went straight to her father. She put her arms around his neck, and laid her lips upon his lips. She murmured in his ear the sweetest words of love and entreaty:

"I love Marius, father, just as dearest mother loved you. I love him because he is

so noble-hearted, so good. I don't mind that he is poor."

"My darling! He will scarcely ever be with you. A sailor's wife hath always fear, and her husband is the cause of her anxiety, instead of being her support in it. In all the trials of womanhood you may be alone. Instead of being your daily comforter he will be engaged in a ceaseless battle with winds and waves that can never be conquered."

"A sailor's wife is the wife of a hero, father. She catches heroism from him. And Marius conquers the winds and waves every time they try to be his master instead of his servant. And I shall always have you with me. Can I fear then? Can I want any good thing with my father by my side? If I love Marius much as his wife, I shall love you as your daughter just as truly. Father, we have always been so close to each other, so dear to each other, for my sake love Marius now; you will soon love him for his own sake."

She had grown more eloquent and less timid with every word. Her arms were still around her father, but her head was thrown slightly backward, and her beautiful, lifted face was so radiant, so full of entreaty, so altogether persuasive, that it was impossible to argue further with a power so compelling. Love made her for the time that splendor of womanhood, whose invincibility is in the confession of her weakness.

The Major glanced at Marius, who stood gazing at his lovely intercesssor with a face of adoring affection. He put out his hand to him, he laid Virginia's hand in her lover's; he left them alone with their unspoken hopes and happiness.

An old man's woes count double, and if Marius was at the full-tide of joy, the Major was at his lowest water-mark. He was disappointed in many respects in Virginia's choice. She had gone out of her own circle for a husband. He could find no fault with Marius, but even if he was perfect he did not want him for a son-in-law. At that hour he was very unhappy, and he walked slowly about his desolate room, shivering both in mind and in body. For the gray, misty morning had become a stormy afternoon, and the cloud-wet lawn, and the ceaseless rain sweeping before a long, lamentable blast, helped his disappointment to depress him.

Near his window there was a very old tree with which he had close sympathies. When it put forth leaves in the spring he congratulated it; he fed the birds that built in its branches, and he resented with it the autumn storms that left it bare. This afternoon it had been rudely awakened out of its winter sleep, and it was tossing its limbs, uttering angry soughings and sighings, hating a high wind, and knowing how near one was. Just so the Major

had been awakened out of his peaceful, domestic life. The future had suddenly become restless and dark to him; it had been light and stable and full of understood and beloved possibilities. He could not help feeling this rude awakening to changed and unknown circumstances.

"Surely I have the capacity of leaping into the dark as cheerfully as most men," he said, grimly, "but I wish I were a little younger."

For it is a dismal hour when we lift life's garland and find that its leaves have nearly dropped away—a dismal hour, truly, if we have no hope beyond. But this man knew on what wings to mount above his fret and heartache. His Bible lay open on its stand. He went to it and laid his hand upon the page, and, thus standing, with reverent heart recalled God's promises to the aged and the lonely. It was the first time in all his life that he had been brought to a strait where he needed them, and he said gratefully, as he turned away comforted, "O wonderful and blessed Book! fitting into every fold of the human heart."

And when the human heart is at one with the heart of God, it cannot be miserable, for then selfish cares fly away, and sorrow flies with them. He lay down and slept heavily, and when he awakened some one had been in his room and lit the fire and gently drawn the curtains, and the pleasant place was full of leap-

ing lights and shadows. Then he dressed for dinner and went down-stairs. Marius rose to meet him, Virginia spoke to him with a kiss. There was so much happiness in the room, he could not help but catch it. And after dinner Mr. Keteltas came in, and they had a game of chess, and then some mulled wine and toast, and Virginia and Marius sang together dear old-fashioned musical ballads, long forgotten—"The Soldier's Tear," "He Never Said he Loved," "The Sailor's Farewell to Home," and, last of all, that fine pilgrim song which old men still quaver feebly, and young men might learn and roll onward:

Over the mountain wave,
See! where they come;
Storm-cloud and winter wind
Welcome them home.
Yet, where the sounding gale
Howls to the sea,
There their song peals along,
Deep-toned and free.
Pilgrims and Wanderers,
Hither we come:
Where the free dare to be,
This is our home.

Dim grew the forest path,
Onward they trod,
Firm beat their noble hearts,
Trusting in God.
Gray men and blooming maids,
High rose their song.

Hear it sweep, clear and deep,
Ever along.
Pilgrims and Wanderers,
Hither we come;
Where the free dare to be,
This is our home.

And in the mean time the two old friends kept up, over the board and the hearth, their discussion of the "greatest and best" of presidents, and his late message.

"We shall not agree upon its main counts, so we will agree to differ, Mr. Keteltas; but what think you of the bringing it by express in little more than twelve hours—two hundred and thirty miles?"

"It shows what money can do; it costs seven hundred dollars, and nobody wanted the message particularly. I see Jackson asks permission of Congress to threaten and menace France—to bully her out of twenty-five million of francs. He must know by this time that he can take what power he pleases. It is very pretty behavior in him to ask Congress at all, for he will do in the end whatever he wants to do."

"The Constitution and the laws——"

"Are but straws in his path. King William of England, or poor Louis Philippe, may need legislative sanction, but Andrew Jackson is above all such petty trammels as bound Washington or Jefferson."

"Being Andrew Jackson."

"Exactly; being Andrew Jackson. But, my

friend, a political message ought not to contain such words as 'reprisals,' 'seizures,' 'sequestration,' and 'taking redress into our own hands.' The Cabinet thought so also; but a person who knows told me that Jackson would not abate a word for all their suggestions. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I know them French. They won't pay unless they are made to pay.'"

"I am quite sure that Jackson will make them pay; and he is right. France owes us the money."

"Well, it is a far cry back to spoliations committed in Napoleon's time."

"They were acknowledged four years ago, and France then agreed to pay us twenty-five million francs in six annual payments. She has not paid her first installment yet, and now the Chamber of Deputies refuse to make any appropriation for the debt. I say, then, Jackson does right to make them keep their word."

"Jackson's most offensive quality to me is his patronage of the United States Government. He really believes that Heaven appointed him its savior."

"All great men have thought themselves more or less inspired."

"Well, at present he has the right of the strongest, and we must submit."

"There is a right of the wisest, but a right of the strongest does not exist, my friend."

To this undertone of states and kings, quarrels about money and threats of war, Marius and Virginia sung their antiphony of mutual love—simple, homely rhymes, which became luminous in the light of their eyes, and full of heavenly melody caught from the divine song in their hearts.

Nothing was said to Keteltas on the subject, and when he turned his mind from the great national themes which absorbed the general conversation, he spoke of Jane's severe illness, and of his grandson. His face changed wonderfully as soon as he uttered her name, and his voice lost its sharp, argumentative tone; it was as gentle as a woman's.

"She is better, thank God! but the little woman is not happy, I think, Major; the life is so strange to her. I wish she was nearer to me. I have been lonelier than you can imagine. And Harry is so restless. To roam and to fight, that is his idea! He talks of Texas, and Houston, and Liberty, till he almost sets my old heart on fire."

"Is the pulpit box a natural place for so strong and vivid and restless a spirit? It is like tying an eagle to a perch, or putting a yoke on a wild stag. If nature has told the boy to go and fight for freedom, you cannot put him into a pulpit to preach the straitest of creeds, and expect him to stay there."

"I am thinking of bringing him to New

York. I will put him into business. Eh! Major, what do you think of that?"

"If he were my boy, I would buy him a rifle and give him a thousand dollars, and let him work out his own life; it is often, to a good youth, working out his salvation."

"He is all I have. I cannot make up my heart to part with Harry. Well, I must go now." He turned to Virginia and Marius then, and said a few words to one about Jane, and to the other about the coming of Atlantic steamships, and so, talking of this and that, went out of the room with an old-fashioned grace and politeness that was very pleasant.

Major Mason went with him to the door, and they lingered in the hall a little, talking at the last moment of the great rise in value of real estate on Long Island.

"Abraham Schermerhorn has sold his farm of one hundred and seventy acres, three miles out of Brooklyn, for one hundred and two thousand dollars; and now he is worrying because he sold it so cheap. He offered it to me four years ago for eighteen thousand dollars. I wish I had bought it. You have a few acres there, I believe?"

"Virginia has. Her mother left the land for her personal use."

"Then she is rich, if she knows how to sell at the market hour. Look after her interests, Major."

"I will." He watched Keteltas go carefully down the slippery steps—for the rain had ceased and it had begun to freeze—and turn toward his home. His air of loneliness struck the major very painfully, for an old man is lonely indeed who has no wife or daughter near him. Then a feeling of gratitude came into his heart. Virginia's choice would not, at least, separate them. Her children would grow up at his knees. He would go down to the grave in the company of those he loved. And, so wonderful a thing is thought, that, as he delayed a moment in the hall to regulate his watch by the great clock standing there, he suddenly remembered an inscription he had seen upon a Christian tomb in the Roman Catacombs: "Whatsoever impious man violates this sepulcher, may he die the last of his people!" He understood, as he slowly turned the hands of his watch, how miserable such a fate might be; and the gentleness and the indulgent love and wisdom of his years and his nature made him feel a tender regret for his apparent want of sympathy in his child's happiness.

So he re-entered the parlor full of this loving, self-disparaging compunction. The music had ceased. Virginia and Marius were sitting together. He noticed particularly the great physical beauty of Marius; his fresh, free, open-air look; he liked his eager wooing; the impetu-

ous admiration that he cared not to hide; the exuberant joy in his love, which would have made him, to those uninterested, almost offensively happy. His arm held close his treasure; his brown, glowing, bending face almost touched the rose-like bloom of Virginia's cheek; he clasped her hand, and it lay in his like a white lily just gathered.

Virginia smiled at her father. With eyes and lips she smiled at the same time, and he went to her and caressed her, and, as he did so, looked into her lover's face and said:

"Marius."

The young man stood up to meet the word. It was the recognition of his right. It was the making of his own name the password into the household and into the heart of its master.

"Marius, my son."

"Father."

"We are a threefold cord; nothing shall separate us?"

"Nothing. Virginia binds us forever."

And then, as he looked at Marius and Virginia, he was conscious of a fourth—a tender, ghostly Presence, who made the air sweet around him, and the whole room sensitive, and he was led by it to a large, half-faded pastel in his room—the shadowy verisimilitude of his own love when she was a maiden of Virginia's age.

His sorrow for her loss was over; he had begun rather to anticipate the joy of their meet-

ing. There had been a time when he had never passed the spot without lifting his eyes to this picture of a vanished face; but latterly it had seldom called him. He now stood before it; he demanded from it the memory he wanted; the spring day when he won her promise. The apple trees were in full flower, and the bees delirious with delignt among them. And they sat down under the pink and silvery domes together, and looked through them to the blue sky, and heard the robins singing to each other, and the little frogs calling discreetly at the edge of the brook. He remembered the lilac dress she wore, and the spray of apple blossoms at her bosom; and, above all, the look in her eyes and the smile on her lips, and the kiss that sealed their betrothal.

And then, by some wonderful mental sympathy that abrogated time and distance, his mind found its utterance through the mind of the greatest of Greeks; and in a low voice he repeated a sentence from that glorious invocation with which the elders of Thebes, half in awe and half in wonder, celebrated the irresistible and all-pervading power of Love—mightier than kings, strong as death, leveling all distinction:

"Invincible Love! Thou who dost rest upon the delicate cheek of the maiden; thou who dost traverse all seas: surely none among the immortals escape thee: nor yet, indeed, any

among men, though they live but for a little space." *

Also, that night Virginia did not write anything in her diary. She was too supremely happy to think of writing her happiness down.

* Sophocles, "Antigone."

CHAPTER XVI.

A TRIP TO ENGLAND.

"Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books."

"Thus grief still treads upon the heels of pleasure;
Married in haste, we may repent at leisure."

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

VIRGINIA'S betrothal was followed by a year of great happiness. All the circumstances of her life conduced toward this end, and she did not seek for or invent imaginary troubles. Marius had, indeed, been a little disappointed concerning his wish for a speedy marriage, but Virginia was not inclined to hurry forward the days of sweet content and radiant hope, and the Major had positively set himself against hurry in the matter. "I want Virginia to be sure of her heart, Captain," he said. "I want her to know you better, to know you when the glamor of romance concerning your profession has become a familiar thing. In one year you can see each other only about six weeks. How much can you learn of your individual tastes and feelings in that time? Do

not hurry happy days. Give every season of life its full harvest."

But though these words had an unsympathetic ring, the heart of the father was full of feeling for his daughter; and one morning, when the first leaves of the trees were still pale and chilly, and spring showers, with moist virtue, were softly cleaving the buds, he said:

"Virginia, I have not been very well. I think I want to feel the pulsing floor of the sea again, and to hear the large music of waves singing to waves. I have such restless memories of the gray clouds and broken lights and streaming storms and scudding sea-birds. The ruddy dawns we watched on the 'Arethusa' haunt me, and last night when the moon rose I could not help longing to see it once more drop to the sea-line like an opal bow. Let us go to Liverpool with Marius this May. We can remain a few weeks in England, and return with him in September."

She looked up like a song of thanksgiving. Her face broke up into smiles, she put down the cup in her hand, and stepped to her father's side and kissed him. "You are the sweetest of fathers; you are like what my dear mother would have been."

"It pleases me to be so, dear. Besides, it will give you and Marius two whole months of each other's society—and that will shorten probation If you are still satisfied with him in

September, then, my darling, get your pretty things in order, and we will have the wedding in the spring. Who can we leave in charge of the house?"

"Nelly, of course."

"But I thought she was to be married next month."

"I do not believe it. She said to me this morning 'She was none sure of herself, and still less sure of John Thomas.' I think there has been what Nelly calls 'a difference' lately."

"You had better inquire about it, then. If Nelly stays we can go with very easy minds."

After breakfast Virginia went to the large parlor and found Nelly there. She was busy with her duster, and the prompt way in which she was handling the chairs, and the positive flip of the cloth, were very indicative of some mental altercation.

"Good-morning, Nelly."

"Good-morning, Miss. It isn't t' day for dusting, but I feel as if it would do me good to wipe things off a bit."

"Is something wrong, Nelly? Are you sick?"

"Well, Miss, though I'm none of them twittering women that hes a knack of making things worse than they are, I'm feared I've been making a fool of mysen about a lad as never existed, only in my awn soft head and heart. I've found out my mistake in time for

sure; but I feel just like somebody I liked was dead."

"Sit down, Nelly, and tell me about it. I dare say it is all your fault."

"No, Miss. It isn't my fault. John Thomas hes been going to t' Wesleyan Chapel ivery Sunday night lately with his landlady's daughter—a varry bonny lass. He says he wants to save her soul, and that she is varry bad in her mind about it. I said nothing against that for two or three weeks, and then I thought it was about time t' job wer done. You remember, Miss, three nights ago, I went down Broadway pretty late, for some medicine for master, and who should I meet but John Thomas and t' lass whose soul he is so fain to save. They looked most like sweethearting as iver I saw. I said, 'Good-night, John Thomas. Is this t' road to t' Wesleyan Chapel, my lad?' and he were that dumfoundered he couldn't say a word back."

"Perhaps he had no opportunity. I dare say you went straight on."

"What would I stop for? But he came t' next morning for his opportunity. I were washing a few things out, and I never lifted my eyes to notice him. He said, 'Morning, Nelly,' and I said, 'Doan't thee Nelly me. Go thy ways and talk to Abby Smith. I've got thy measure, my lad, and it's a varry short one.' 'Is that your meaning, Nelly Haworth?' he

said, and I spoke back, sharp-like, 'Ay, that is all I hev to say to thee on any subject.' Then he went out, and slammed t' door after him; and I opened it quick and told him 'niver to darken it again.' He stood still a minit, dazed-like, and then walked himsen off, looking down at his shoes as he went. I feel varry bad, Miss."

"He will come back to you again, Nelly."

"I doan't want him to come back."

"Did he not speak to you again?"

"He hed nothing to say for himsen—but as for low-spirity looks! if he could hev sold them by t' yard they would hev set up an undertaker for a year."

"Nelly, we think of going to England this summer. Will you stay and take care of the house?"

"I'll be right glad to. I'll not marry till I know what I'm marrying. My word! marrying is an insane doo, anyhow you fix it. I hev all my senses yet, Miss."

It was then the latter end of April, and the "Arethusa" was expected early in May; so the days were full of preparation. And the Major had that exaltation of heart which always blessed the happiness-makers; and everything around was in accord with the glorious weather and his own mental atmosphere. Jackson's popularity and power was at its highest point; there was great enthusiasm and energy about railway affairs; the Erie

Railway was just beginning, the Boston and Providence was nearly finished. Real estate had taken a marvelous rise; he had sold Virginia's land for a small fortune; and there was hope and prosperity in all public matters, excepting on the Abolition question.

This prosperous national atmosphere is a great aid to private content. The Major became almost young again in his daughter's evident happiness; for she went singing about the house, and the song echoed in his own heart; while her smiles, and ready mirth, and eager little ways of adding to his pleasure, imparted to him unconsciously an innocent self-estimation which was very exhilarating. They went on board the "Arethusa" full of hope, and ready to smile and chatter about every trivial event.

And what a voyage it was! only, with that perversity which often dogs great happiness, all nature seemed determined to shorten it. The wind was too favorable, the "Arethusa" went flying before it at a speed that took her into Liverpool two days before her time; and it was amusing to see her captain frowning at the swelling canvas, and upbraiding the favorable breeze as if it was his unkindest enemy.

In travel and rest, in love-letter writing, in reading, in dreams of Marius, in shopping, in planning, and in writing to Jane Forfar about her husband and her baby, and to Nelly about

the house, the soft, cool English summer sped away; and they were again at sea, with their hearts and faces turned to New York.

How proudly Marius trod his little kingdom! How trig and bright and clean every inch of the "Arethusa" had been made for Virginia's sake! With what shy, pleased looks the sailors watched their captain and the girl who was to be his wife!—for Marius had not been able to hide the fact from those who knew him so well. They saw the glance that strangers never noticed—the leaping light into his face when she answered it; they understood the overhauling the ship had got; the strictness about their own jackets and caps; the cook's frantic efforts to realize almost impossible dinners and desserts. They knew why the Captain growled *sotto voce* at fair weather and fair winds, and looked so smiling and complacent when the sails flapped idly by the mast, and the "Arethusa" just loitered along in the charming September weather.

"They look so happy," said the boatswain, "I'd keep them drifting for a twelvemonth, if I could whistle down the wind. I say my prayers at the mainmast, and not in a church pew, but I'll go to church to see this wedding."

An old sailor interrupted him with an almost passionate anger. "What are you naming a bell-house at sea for? Do you want to bring

ruin on crew, ship, and cargo? I'm blessed if I haven't a mind to throw you overboard, Sheridan."

The man turned white, and turned away, muttering: "Pardon, mates! I didn't know myself that I was naming anything so unlucky."

But the unfortunate six letters did not at this time conjure any ill to the "Arethusa." She came to her anchor with full sails and crowded decks, and her captain sent every one from her with a good word, and then took his seat in Major Mason's carriage and drove home with Virginia for his first meal on shore.

In the evening Jack and his bride called, and Jack was as peacocky and uxorious as young husbands usually are. There was but one fair, good wife in the world, and Jack had been so fortunate as to secure her. He looked with positive coolness at his brother's choice. The love of Marius and Virginia seemed to Jack such a very poor affair, compared with the astounding quality of Carrie's and his own affection. He was, figuratively, at his wife's feet all the evening. He was afraid that the wind might blow upon her, or the night air chill her, or the dark frighten her, only in the latter case he was by her side, and bold as a lion for her defense.

They had been married a month, and Mr. Cushing had given his daughter a pretty house

near St. John's Park. So Jack was not only a husband, he was a householder; and Marius could not help laughing at the lad's wise talk about the dearness of provisions, and the old, old trouble of servants. Besides which, he had been promoted in the office, and he could talk largely or mysteriously of great events. Marius listened to him with immense delight. He thoroughly enjoyed the young fellow's conceited happiness, his excess of self-satisfaction, his endless little chimes on the various sides of his own good fortune. When Mr. and Mrs. Jack Bradford left, he kissed them both with his old tender admiration, and, happily, was not conscious that Jack was a trifle offended at the elder brother's air, the tolerance and jocularity of his brother.

"I think Virginia has spoiled Marius," he said confidentially to Carrie; and Carrie said, with a toss of her pretty head, "It is to be plainly seen that he is only your half-brother, dear Jack. You are so superior to him—every way." And of course Jack believed his wife: what men do not, when their wives speak comfortable things?

"Isn't he set up?" asked Marius. "Did you ever see such a young prince? He thinks the world was made for him."

"I think he is very disagreeable," answered Virginia. "He was really selfish, Marius—almost rude. Joy should not make people selfish."

The Major smiled as he gave his opinion. "Jack has a great deal to say about himself and his wife, his business, his opinions, and his friends. It is said that twelve bells afford scope for nearly five hundred million permutations. Jack's Ego has at least twelve bells."

The little chaffing about Jack's marriage brought on a serious discussion relating to the marriage of Virginia and Marius, and it was finally agreed to celebrate it during the spring visit of Marius to New York—"April or May, as it happens," said the Major.

"April, if the wind goes with my hopes and longings, Major."

The next day Mr. Keteltas called very early in the morning. They were eating breakfast, and he seemed glad of the delicious cup of coffee Virginia placed at his side. "I have little comfort in eating now, my dear, I am so lonely. Harry has gone, too."

"Gone?"

"Off to Texas, my dear. The country has gone mad on the subject, I think. You should have seen the young fellows leaving—two hundred and forty of them—all full of hope and spirit. And the crowds that cheered them! And the cries for Houston and Crockett and Jackson! I was almost carried away with the shouts. A few hundred Americans fighting for their rights and liberty the whole power of Mexico! It looks like a grand fight, Major!

If I were only a young man, I too would gladly shoulder a musket behind Sam Houston."

"A few against a many always touches a noble heart; and when that handful of men are Americans—our own brothers in race and feeling—well, it is right, it is good, to go and help them. I am sure Harry did well. I would have gone with him, too—if I were only twenty years younger."

"Give me leave to say that I almost forgot that I was near sixty. When Harry, with his bright face and cheery voice, shouted from the deck, 'Hurrah for Liberty and Houston! Come along, father! we want you too!' I thind, Major, I really think I would have taken the boy's invitation if some one had not just at that moment hurrahed for Jackson too. I hesitated at that cry, and at the moment the ship was loosed, and off she went, and so saved me from making an old fool of myself. It was railways and real estate when you went away; it is Texas and Abolition now."

"Where will they end?"

"Texas will end in the independence of a great province; anon, the province will be in the Union. That is the stake Jackson and Houston are playing for. Abolition may end in civil war, in horrors unmentionable. The State of Mississippi has just offered five thousand dollars for the delivery of any person buying or sending within her borders Garrison's fire-

brand of a sheet, or any other abolition paper. I do not blame them much, and yet, when I read Jane's letters, they make me shiver."

"When did you hear last from her?"

"About a week since. Harry is going to see her. I want to know the truth. I have just come back from Boston."

"Boston?"

"Yes, my dear. Harry has talked me into a fever of patriotism, I think, and when I had an invitation to the Concord Jubilee I took myself to Concord—I and Deacon Sears. A very solemn, noble celebration, and I heard a young clergyman speak there, of whom, I take leave to say, we shall all hear very soon—the Rev. Ralph Waldo Emerson, a fine young man indeed."

"Who else of note was present?"

"Well, Major, the greatest of all there, I take it, were ten old gentlemen who had fought in the battle of Concord. I think it an honor to have shaken hands with them. Yes, I am pleased I went; for an odd time, it was better than the Exchange. When did you hear from Jane, my dear?" he said, turning to Virginia; "let me know the truth of all she tells you."

"You can rely upon Harry, sir. He would have sharp eyes for anything troubling his sister."

"If Harry goes there—he said he would—but young men with a rifle in their hand, and a

fight before them! My dear, you cannot be their surety. No, no."

Yet at that very hour Harry was sitting by his sister's side, trying to discover the secret of her faded beauty, and the haunting look of trouble in her once bright eyes. She had come down to him on the previous evening as Nigel had begged her to do—"like a happy wife"; and the first hours of their meeting had been so full of question and answer, and of merry interchange of talk, that Harry was quite satisfied with the domestic happiness of his sister. The first doubt came later on, when Jane, having exhausted her inquiries about Virginia's regular life, suddenly asked: "Has she any new lover? or is Van Buren still hoping and waiting?"

"I hardly know how to answer you, Jane. A certain sea captain has been there a great deal this past year, and the Major and Virginia went to England in his ship last May. They were still away—as I have told you—when I left."

Jane's rapid mind instantly divined the truth, and she endeavored to turn the subject at once. Nigel would not permit it. His face was black with suspicion, and he glanced with cruel meaning at his wife, as he said to Harry:

"The master of the 'Arethusa,' I suppose—Captain Bradford?"

"Yes, that is the name of the man, and the

ship also. I was on the point of remembering them."

"I am not likely to forget them—the very scoundrel who ran off two of my slaves. Miss Mason's lover! Oh, I begin to see daylight now!"

Jane was sick at heart; she pretended to hear her baby crying, and left the room. She was wringing her small hands despairingly as she trailed her heavy feet and heart up-stairs. The child was asleep in its cradle. Palma lay upon the floor at its side. She also was asleep. Jane sat down and tried to think. Was it worth while to lie the suspicion away? Had she not better tell Harry the truth? It seemed a hopeless task to combat, or even to endure, the horror of sin and cruelty which gathered like dense clouds above and around her. And the great horror was the bringing of her child up in such an atmosphere. He might grow like his surroundings. How could she train him differently without setting him at variance with all he ought to love? Any mother has only to put herself in Jane's place to understand how this sore straight between her husband and her child, her conscience and her happiness, tore the poor loving, fearing, upright heart with cruel and ever-deepening lacerations.

She could come to no conclusion, and she did not dare to delay; she must go down again,

and hide, as well as she was able, the wrong and the indignation that made her inner self burn and throb and resent the bonds of conventional deception by which it was bound. For it is in such hours as these we understand fully the duality of our nature—the outer and the inner personality. The outer and fleshly Jane was busied with the cares of the hostess; she was ordering the supper table; she was singing a song; she was adding to the conversation a jest or a query. The inner and nobler Jane was living over again that shameful scene in the cabin; was really sick with the shambles-like tainted air; really shivering at the sound of the lash and the cry; really burning with wrong and indignation in the memory of that terrible walk from the penal pen to the house; conscious yet of the silent, angry man at her side; the awful gloom of the shadowing trees—the whir of invisible wings round her, and the demoniac croaks and calls and whisperings of the night birds and insects; evil legions of darkness, hurting and defiling and penetrating everywhere.

And the two women in one suffered and smiled through four long hours. Then the ordeal was over, and in the secrecy of her room Jane dropped the fleshly veil, and gave her nobler self a sufficient audience. In the morning the duel was renewed; "for the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the

earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things."* As she bathed and combed out her long hair, and dressed herself with a conscious desire to look handsome, she was arguing one of the greatest questions that troubles the heart of woman—are the rights of Love above those of Truth and Justice and Human Kindness? Should she stand by Nigel in all that was cruel and cowardly, through all the injustice of slavery, counting the marriage obligation above all moral ones? One Jane said "yes"; the other Jane said a positive "no," enforcing the order with a terrible penalty for its transgression—"for if thou sow upon the furrows of unrighteousness, thou shalt reap them sevenfold."

The wisest little treatise that ever man wrote—Ecclesiasticus—was at her side, for it was John Paul's counselor, and he had given a copy of it to Jane as a marriage gift, saying, as he put it into her hand:

"Ask of it in every perplexity, my little Jane; it will give you good counsel in all the straits of life. It is better than your father, for its wisdom is not weakened by earthly love, nor swayed by worldly interest."

She had almost superstitious regard for its oracles; she feared to disobey them; and therefore, when she was determined to take her own

* Wisdom of Solomon, ix. 15.

way, she did not inquire of them. This morning, however, at the last moment, when the servant had called her to breakfast, when she was at the door of her room, she turned back and opened the book: "*Constantly endure and make not haste in the time of trouble.*"

The verse pleased her, it gave her time; she put resolutely down all other thought but that of delay; she was deaf to the sorrowful and indignant intercession going on in a sub-conscious way, while she laughed and talked with Harry, and kept intact that marital neutrality which she had promised Nigel to observe. But Harry during the night had reflected on many little looks and words, and also on the omission of many small marks of affection he might reasonably have expected to witness between his sister and her husband. The true Jane troubled the eyes that looked at him, and gave unconscious sadness to her voice, and little indecisions to her manners which were pathetic.

But the boat had only stopped at Memphis to collect recruits, and these were to be on board at the noon hour, and he had no time to raise questions that could not be settled. If Jane made no complaints, and he saw nothing unkind in her treatment, it did not seem right to ask questions which might raise doubts yet latent. After all, Harry did not want to be delayed; he was sure of that, and it was so strong

a certainty that it permitted no uncertainty a hearing.

So during his stay the decencies of domestic life had a full observance. Nigel went to the boat to see the gay, gallant troop of young paladins sail southward, amid the shouts and cheers of the thousands lining the high bluffs. They were later than had been expected, and Nigel did not then return home. He called on the Pagets first, and had a cup of coffee, and heard a new, marvelous story of abolition doings on a neighboring plantation, and read aloud a copy of the "Liberator" that had been found in a room of the hotel; and so lingered away the hours, that it was nearly dusk when he reached home.

Jane heard him coming. She had determined to meet him pleasantly and ignore the trouble entirely which she had agreed to ignore temporarily. When he opened the door, she turned her head with a smile to greet him. "I am so glad to see you, Nigel. Has Harry gone? How many recruits did they get in Memphis?"

He treated her as if she was not there—as if she did not exist. He was deaf to her words. He looked at her where she stood, all eager and smiling, as if he looked into empty space. Then she humbled herself and said: "I am sorry I grieved you, Nigel."

He took the "Liberator" from his pocket, and began to read, and then tear, as he read,

every paragraph into shreds, and slowly burn them.

"Nigel! Will you not speak to me?"

He was as one quite alone. Except as an object to torture, his wife did not exist for him.

"I have served your purpose, I see, Nigel. Harry has gone—I have no one to appeal to; and you are so used to cruelty and deception that you have no honor, and no shame in dishonor left. This is Southern chivalry, indeed!"

He began to sing—some silly, love-sick passages that Miss Imogene generally warbled for his delectation—a song that he knew Jane particularly hated, because she had watched its translation by the two who affected it. She left the room then, and went to the nursery. But she had no heart even for her baby. She sat down by the closed window, and looked with a stern, melancholy face into the melancholy garden.

A woodpecker was calling rain with an impatient *Plieu! Plieu!* He was sitting on a tree close by the window; he seemed almost to be speaking to her. The Roman augurs thought the call one of disaster; Jane, without knowing this, grew angry at the bird's persistent cry. She did not know that woodpeckers work frequently into the night; that the savage, indefatigable pickax of a bill was interrogating the tree for voids; she thought there

was something sinister in the bird; and she rose with such an impatient movement of her chair that it awakened little Paul, and he began to cry loudly.

Nigel came into the room scolding at the uproar. "There is no peace in this house," he cried. He took the child from Palma's arms, and, as it would not cease at his order, he struck it. Then the mother interfered. There was a cruel scene, which left Jane flaming with anger, and little Paul sobbing with terror and pain. Thus the thin veil of domestic respect was rent from the face of domestic wrong and quarreling. After this exhibition of temper, Nigel cared no more to hide his disapproval of his wife or his disagreements with her. He seemed rather to take a pleasure in mortifying her before her slaves. And they covertly honored and pitied her; they knew she was suffering for their sake.

A loving woman feels less the death of her husband than the slow decay of his affection, with its tantalizing quickenings and returns, and its hopeless chills and relapses. During the next three months Jane suffered continually from wrongs whose pettiness increased her suffering. She was attacked through her sectional prejudices. Beauty, manners, opinions, in exact opposition to her own, were publicly as well as privately admired. She was accused of morbid ill-temper, of passionate outbreaks;

she was said to be an Abolitionist, to have consequently given up going to church, and to be perfectly irreligious.

Day after day, week after week, the trial went on; grew more bitter and more hopeless. Nigel stayed longer and longer from his home, and the intervals between their disputes grew shorter and shorter, their reconciliations less and less affectionate. But the discipline strengthened and deepened Jane's character, and the piety that had been a holy form, lived and breathed in all her thoughts and feelings. She had received a Word in her heart, "Strive for the truth unto Death"; and she was ready to trust Him who is "a God of the afflicted; an helper of the oppressed; an upholder of the weak; a protector of the forlorn; a savior of them that are without hope." *

Still she could do nothing to hurry events. She felt that ere she took another decided step she must be sure that it was on the right road. She did not always hold herself blameless about the saving of Palma's brothers. True, there was absolutely no other way to rescue the boys. She was sure that any appeal to Nigel would have been worse than useless; and yet perhaps she ought to have made that appeal. The thought that she had been in a measure a traitor to her husband made her

* Judith, ix. 11.

patient many times when she would otherwise have been beyond speaking to.

At the time she thought she did a good deal; she had a doubt about it sometimes when it was too late to undo it. Surely it was a hard strait for any wife. Who would dare to put themselves in Jane's place, and say, "I would have stood by my husband and let the boys have gone into slavery. I would have remembered his happiness, and put from me all care of their physical suffering and moral degradation. I would have kept my home happy, though they had died in pestilential bayous, or burnt up with fevers, or perished under the lash, or fretted their life out in the shame and horror and wrong of their position?"

But sorrowful as the weeks following Harry's visit were, Jane grew in them to a nobler stature than joy would ever have granted her. For happiness diffuses and dissipates our finer qualities, our most subtle excellencies; but sorrow brings us all back to our central being, limits the overflowing of life, and makes what remains stronger, finer, richer. Jane was now approaching the hour which was to test the work of sorrow, and she was ready to meet it.

CHAPTER XVII.

FIRE!

"Threatening comets, when by night they rise,
Shoot sanguine streams, and sadden all the skies."

—*Dryden.*

"If in some town a fire breaks out by chance,
The impetuous flames with lawless power advance;
On ruddy wings the bright destruction flies,
Followed with ruin and amazing cries.
The flaky plague spreads swiftly with the wind,
And ghastly desolation howls behind."

—*Blackmore.*

"And all that is befallen is done unto us for our wicked works and great sins."—1 Esdras, viii. 86.

DURING these sad weeks in the which Jane was growing through suffering to strength, Virginia was resting her heart in the full measure of contented and hopeful love. The bright October days brought with them many outside interests for the Major. The county was already agitating the question of the next President, and an Abolition Convention, appointed to meet at Utica, was regarded with extreme uneasiness and disapprobation. Gambling in stocks was becoming an almost legitimate business; and sudden reverses of fortune and dishonorable appropriations of money followed each other so quickly that the event of Monday

was forgotten in the event of Tuesday. Men had caught the fever of money-making; they were hastening to be rich, and ceasing to be innocent and honorable in the unholy struggle.

But these things touched Virginia only on the outside. She sat through the charming weather nearly all day long with some sewing in her hand, her heart full of happy dreams, her loving thoughts flying over the sea with Marius. Sometimes the Major had a little spasm of jealousy at her intentness of personal meditation, at her privacy of happiness. He had grown accustomed to come to her for sympathy in all matters that touched his own likings or dislikings; and he fancied that he missed somewhat of her usual ready response. And he did miss it; for it is certain that four eyes see better than two eyes, earth at its fairest and broadest, and heaven at its nearest; so that if Virginia would not see with him, he lost the illumination of her view; the pleasant womanly side-lights that stimulated his own clearer vision.

He reflected with a sigh that she seemed to care very little about the Utica meeting, and he wondered vaguely how it was she should have been so extremely enthusiastic concerning the Forfar boys, and then declare she was glad when the people of Utica stopped Lewis Tappan in the middle of his red-hot speech, broke up the Convention, and compelled its

members to leave the city. "They ought to mind their own business," she said fretfully. "I am sure we have all plenty to do, without lifting burdens not meant for us."

The Presidential election was no more interesting to her. The Major wanted to talk about the chances of Mr. Webster and General Harrison, and she listened without interest. "Mr. Webster is such a grand-looking man, I think he ought to be president," she said; and then, perceiving that her father waited for some further expression of her views, she asked, with an affected concern:

"Who is General Harrison? Have I ever seen him? I do not think I have ever heard of him."

"He was commanding general in the battle of the Thames."

"Oh, yes! that Indian battle in which poor brave Tecumseh was killed; that is more than twenty years ago."

"It is never too late to honor the brave, Virginia."

"No. Poor Tecumseh! I heard Mr. Keteltas say that Harrison did not kill the Indian chief; he said it was a man called Johnson."

"I believe it is doubtful."

"But, then, it is not an honor that any one need covet. Brave men are gentle men, and I should say there was very little credit in killing that unfortunate Indian chief."

"I do not think you take much interest in anything now, Virginia."

"But I do, father, just as much as ever. Who will you vote for? General Harrison?"

"If you would only give me a moment's thought, Virginia, you would know that I should not vote for General Harrison."

Then Virginia blushed and put down her work, and tried by an excessive attention to atone for her want of interest in Mr. Webster and General Harrison.

Something of the same kind occurred nearly every day. Virginia had, in fact, an absorbing affection for Marius, and if she was not constantly striving against its dominating power, all other interests were lost in it.

One memorable night in December they were sitting together. The weather was intensely, cruelly cold, and Virginia was glad to be as close to the fire as possible. Marius had just left New York. If all was well he would be back in February; then the arrangements for their marriage were to be decided upon. All would be ready for April or May, and Virginia felt sure winds and waves would go with love, and bring the "Arethusa" to anchor in April.

She was thinking of all the pretty garments she had made; thinking of the girls she would ask to be her bridemaids; thinking of the sweet details which would make the ceremony what she was determined it should be—a path-

ering of all that was lovely and honorable ; that so she might signify to every one her pride in her chosen husband, her sense of his perfect equality, and her intention to exact all suitable respect for him.

The Major was reading a newspaper. He had been grumbling all week at Governor McDuffie's message to the South Carolina Legislature; for in it he had not only glorified slavery—that the Major would have smiled at —but he had asserted that "slavery was the corner-stone of our republican edifice." The whole North had protested against such a claim ; the papers were full of the most indignant denials. Suddenly he shook his "Courier" with a triumphant little flutter. "Listen to this, Virginia, and then try and fit it to worthy music. I shall enjoy hearing Marius roll it out, as if he meant every one to hear it from stern to bow."

"What is it, father? Some song for 'Jackson, ho'?"

"No, Miss, it is not. It is an answer to McDuffie's shameful statement that slavery is the soul of our Republic :

"'Its life ! its soul ! from slavery drawn ?
Foul, false, profane ! Go teach as well
That holy Truth's from falsehood born,
Or heaven refreshed by airs from hell.

. . . . .

"'Rail on ! brethren of the South !
You shall not hear a truth the less.

No seal is on the Yankee's mouth,
No fetter on the Yankee press.
From our Green Mountains to the sea,
One voice shall thunder—We are free!'"

"It is very good, father, and I suppose it speaks for the general public. I know it speaks for Marius, and I am sure he will sing it well."

Then there was another silence, and when the Major spoke again it was on a very different subject. "Virginia, do you remember how Halley's comet looked?"

"I did not look at it, father. I have the greatest objection to a comet. I would not let my eyes catch its malevolent influence; so I cannot tell you how this year's visitor appeared to me. Why do you ask?"

"Only, some one is describing it here as 'splendoring the night from horizon to horizon; marching in glory through the constellations,' etc., etc., while in reality—unless my eyes were wrong—it was wan and dim, and had a melancholy radiance, that produced an indescribable sadness. I saw it in Edinburgh through a large telescope; and that fine man, Professor Wilson, and a rough, jocular, poetical genius called Hogg, were with me. It impressed both of them also in the same manner; it was really a bluish, vague, leaden light, unlike the light of either sun, moon, or star."

"I hold, with Milton, that comets shake plagues and sorrows from their 'horrid hair!'

—What is that noise? A bell? The bell of the old Dutch Church! But it is like a bell gone mad."

There was a moment's silence, followed by a clash of bells and an indescribable sense of tumult in the air above, and then by a gathering tumult in the city below them. Men began to run pell-mell down the snow-bound street, shrieking "*Fire!*" as they went. The noise of the engines flying to the scene of disaster, followed by excited citizens, was heard with terrible meaning in the clear, frosty atmosphere. The Major looked at his watch. "It is only eight o'clock, Virginia. I wonder if——"

"Father, if it was only noon, you ought not to go out. It is really tempestuous weather, and the thermometer is far below zero. You can be of no use."

The Major knew his inability well, but he felt it hard to submit to reason. For with every moment the excitement increased. Very soon the whole city was lit by the spreading flames. The shouts of the firemen; the shrieking of women and children; the hoarse calls of thousands fighting the flames, shouting for water, shouting for help; the rushing of horses and wagons; the clamor of a hundred church bells; the ever-nearing, ever-spreading fire, lighting in lurid colors the streets, the river, the raving citizens, and the moored silent shipping

—made a terrible and not to be resisted excitement.

Virginia wandered from window to window. The Major, having put his gold and papers into a portable shape, shared her agonizing restlessness. John Thomas, who happened to be in the kitchen with Nelly, was sent out for news, and came back nearly speechless with horror. The lower part of the city was a sea of fire, and men had gone all but mad with fright. No one thought of sleep. The hours passed in inconceivable anxiety, and about midnight there were constant and awful explosions. "They are blowing up buildings!" said the Major, drawing his lips tight, and quite unconscious that tears were rolling down his face. Soon afterward Mr. Keteltas came. "Let me in, friends," he said, "and get me a cup of coffee, Virginia. I was forced to come to you, I could bear it no longer alone."

The Major clasped his hand and Virginia had the fires replenished, and helped Nelly to make strong coffee for all to drink. "New York is a bankrupt city to-night, Major. She is put back twenty-five years by this calamity."

"I think not, Mr. Keteltas."

"And Boston and Philadelphia will get ahead of us, Major."

"Not they."

"Now let President Jackson out with the surplus millions. If he is a man at all, he will

send the money at once to rebuild our dear, beautiful city. We paid it to the government—most of it; let us have it back; we are ruined, bankrupt! Oh, New York! New York! I would have given every house I have to the flames, to have saved the rest. I would indeed! I am an old man—I would have given my own life."

"Come, come, Mr. Keteltas; you will live to see New York rise up fairer and fresher than ever from her lustration by fire. A year will put all better than it was."

"How can it be better? All the beautiful streets, the grand warehouses, the noble public buildings and churches! Oh, what a calamity! What a ruinous calamity! We will have a right searching into it. I would not wonder if politics are at the bottom of it—or the Abolitionists. Why did they not let them have their shriek out at Utica? Do you know that every insurance office in New York refused to insure Arthur Tappan? He had to go to Boston for insurance. I do not approve of such bigotry. It is not like New York. It brings ruin. Oh, the dreadful cold, and the ice on the river so hard they could drive a wagon on it yesterday! How will the firemen get water? Listen! They are using gunpowder again! God help us! God help us!"

At length the late, gray dawn broke over the burnt city. Keteltas could no longer be re-

strained. He was determined to go down the street and find out what damage had been done. The Major went with him. They returned very shortly. There was a chain of marines from the Navy Yard around the burnt precinct. No one was calm enough to tell a sensible story. But they saw the firemen dragging their engines home, many of them dead asleep with exhaustion, others pulling unconsciously, and ready to drop on the street.

Mr. Keteltas had his breakfast with the Masons, and then pushed his way down town. He had much property in the burnt district, and he was not so hopeless of it as he had been while the fire was raging. "There is nothing for ill-luck but mending it," he said; "we must even go to building again." He promised to return for dinner, and he was most eagerly looked for.

"It is worse than our worst fears, Major," he said, as he tucked a napkin into his vest and looked approvingly at his soup. "As I said, the river was frozen; the ice was to cut before any water could be got. Finally some of the engines were lowered to the ice and worked there. Will you imagine that? In Hanover Square there was a mountain, sixty feet wide and thirty feet high, of silks, satins, laces, cashmere shawls, and rich India goods. They were thought at midnight to be quite safe there; an hour afterward they were in ashes—

with such amazing swiftness spread the fire. Half the First Ward is burnt up. Seven hundred stores are gone. Forty millions of goods, at a rough estimation."

"Where did the fire begin?"

"In Merchant Street—a bad place, narrow and crooked, filled with high stores and dry goods; then to Pearl Street, on to Coenties Slip, Wall Street down to the river, including all South Street, Water Street, Exchange Street, Post's stores, Lord's Row, William, Beaver, and Stone Streets—all gone! The Merchants' Exchange is a heap of ruins. Mr. Schermerhorn told me the firemen became exhausted, the citizens despairing and apathetic, the lower orders were mad with drink, and total destruction seemed inevitable, when Captain Nix with a body of marines from the Navy Yard appeared."

Virginia's face lightened at the mention of the marines, and she asked, "How did these men, accustomed to the sea, fight fire?"

"They did it as only men accustomed to danger and well disciplined could do it. Mr. Schermerhorn said their very appearance inspired confidence and hope, and set good men to work once more. Each marine carried in his hands a small barrel of gunpowder, and they followed their officers through the shower of fire and sparks as calm and orderly as if they were going to drill. Captain Nix walked in

front of them and pointed out the houses necessary to be blown up; and the men, led by the lieutenants, did the work with the greatest coolness and rapidity."

"The dear, brave fellows!"

"Yes, my dear, they were brave. It takes brave men to carry gunpowder through a shower of burning *débris;* and I take leave to say few would have dared it. Captain Nix deserves great praise."

"Every man with him deserves equal praise," said the Major. "It was a noble deed."

"The sea breeds heroes, father. Men who live with danger and neighbor to death must have stout hearts."

"They blew up one of my own buildings, Major—worth thirty thousand dollars. It gave me a pang at my heart to see its skeleton standing black and bare. But I complain not. There are twenty thousand people out of work; crowds of both sexes are wandering in the streets; the cold is terrible, and they do not seem to notice it. Many look demented."

"How did you get around?"

"I do not know. I went into places and over places I would not put foot into if I was in my sober senses. I did not feel myself at all—that is the truth."

"It must be an awful scene, Mr. Keteltas!"

"It is, Major. The streets are full of hot

bricks and of burning goods. Boxes, bales, desks, safes, papers, furniture are scattered everywhere. United States soldiers are keeping what guard they can; but men, women, and boys are stealing on all hands. The heat is infernal; the cold is infernal. I saw crowds warming themselves by fires made from India silks and Irish linens. I saw a great mound of Hyson tea burning. I saw hogsheads of sugar strewed about, and people carrying it off in baskets. The sidewalks on the Bowling Green hold a million dollars worth of fine goods—the owners and their clerks are keeping guard over them, and half frozen at their posts. Whitehall Slip is piled with silks, sarsnets, and brocades. Some of the richest families in New York have lost all they had; and I heard a class of foreign scoundrels openly rejoicing over it. They were prowling about the ruins, drunk with the liquor they had stolen from the wharves, and telling each other: 'This will make the aristocracy haul in their horns! they will make no more five per cent. dividends'—miserable, ungrateful wretches! Did you hear the bell of the old Dutch Church ring when the fire broke out?"

"Indeed we did, Mr. Keteltas," said Virginia. "It was the most frantic cry that ever came from a bell's mouth. Surely no mortal hand rang that bell; for cities have their guardian angels, as well as men and women."

"Something like that everybody is saying

The sexton declares when he went to the door the bell was swinging like mad, and the door locked and no one in the church. Dr. Matthews also told me a very singular thing. He went to his fine church in Garden Street; the fire was all around it, and some one began to play a dirge upon the organ—the grandest music ever mortal ears heard. It began as the fire struck the church, and lasted until the lofty ceiling was all in a blaze. He says hundreds heard the music. I know not what to think, nor how to believe such things.'

"In hours of such supreme feeling, may we not drop something of the flesh, may not spiritual senses, which we certainly possess, assert themselves? You admit that you walked today where in your ordinary state you would not dare to put a foot. When the spiritual hearing is opened, then spiritual sounds can be discerned. Also, angels bent on succor may need the help of numbers, or of inherent power; even as mortals do, and the cry of the bell may have reached further than we can guess of."

"Of such questions I know nothing, Major; no, nor does any other man—but what think you? Arthur Tappan escaped the general ruin. After the sacking of his house last year he built his store of stone, and covered every window with boiler iron. It stood the fire for more than an hour while everything was blazing around it; and all his books, papers, and

one hundred thousand dollars' worth of rich goods were removed by the blacks, who went in a body to his help, and showed a pluck and daring that was tremendous."

"I am glad to hear it! A work of gratitude like that makes my heart thrill. I call such men brothers, whether they be black or white."

"The Chamber of Commerce has lost its Charter—the immense document, covered with seals and ribbons, given to it by King George the Third. Really, I am getting warm again. The cold is frightful; men are going about with icicles hanging from their beards and clothing, and their hair is stiff with frozen vapor. Such a scene of desolation! Such suffering! Such ruin! Many a man's life-labor gone in an hour; thousands without shelter or daily bread! I must go home and rest now. To-morrow there will be work enough for all true hearts and strong hands."

"Stay here, Mr. Keteltas."

"No, thank you, Major. I have to look over my papers. I want to certify myself what I have really lost, and I want to write to Jane and Harry."

The letter to his daughter John Paul wrote before he slept. It was the expression, not only of his own great losses, but the forcible picture of the awful ruin and suffering of his dear native city. He told it all to Jane; he told her how lonely he was; how he longed to

see her; how he loved his little grandson. He begged her to try and visit him soon; he laid upon the white sheet the outward symbols of his affectionate, solitary spirit.

This message of love and sorrow did not reach Memphis until after the New Year. Jane had just received a glowing letter from her brother Harry, describing that miraculous assault of Milan against the old Spanish Alamo.

"We are in possession of San Antonio! Hurrah! Two hundred Americans have taken the city! Hurrah! I wish you could have seen Milan leading us. I wish you could have seen those Texans picking off the men with their rifles, and never missing one shot in a thousand. It was glorious, Jane! This is life, Jane! Freedom! Freedom! Freedom! Ring the bells merrily with us, Jane:

> "'Tol de rol, tol de rol, tol de rol!
> The Texans have taken the Alamo!
> Alamo! Alamo! Alamo!
> The Texans have taken the Alamo!
> Tol de rol, tol de rol, tol de rol!'"

For a couple of pages Harry thus expressed his enthusiasm in the fight; his delight in the exquisite land; his wonder at its fertility; his infatuation with the beautiful black-eyed señoritas; his contempt for the effeminate, dazzlingly dressed señors. It was a letter of exclamations and adjectives and inexpressible delights.

Nigel was charmed with it. He began to feel the latent passion in his own blood. He was holding his head an inch higher as he rode into Memphis with the blazing little sheet in his pocket. He read it there to constantly gathering groups in Tobin's store. He sent many a man away to buy a new rifle and take a ticket for the Texas coast. The instinct of liberty—which, to the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-American, means dominance—put under it all smaller passions. For a few hours he despised the trifling wrongs he had been nursing—the petty thefts of his slaves, the provoking, independent ways of his wife, the innuendoes of his neighbors—they all crept into the dark corners of his heart, and he could only see that handful of Americans marching to liberty and conquest, defying armies with their never-fail rifles and their never-doubt courage. He was thinking of that gay paladin Milan and of the knightly Sam Houston, and for a few hours he forgot that his corn-crib had been robbed, that his cotton had been undersold, and that young Desart was taking his sentimental place in the life of Imogene Paget.

Toward night he mounted his horse to return home. He had had a happy, triumphant day. He felt pleased with Jane for being the occasion of his possessing a brother-in-law so daring and so admirable. As he

rode up Main Street, he stopped at the post-office for letters, and received that of John Paul's describing the fire. It was of course a heavy letter, and it awakened suspicion at once. What possible cause could there be for such a volume of correspondence? What was it about? Being so intensely selfish and self-conceited, he could think of no other subject interesting enough to require such expansion but Nigel Forfar. What had Jane been saying about him? When he reached the outskirts of the city it was still light; he hesitated a moment, then he broke the large red seal and read the letter.

He could not restrain his wicked joy in the news it brought. "Good enough for the Abolitionists!" he said, with satisfaction, and he reined in his horse and stopped at Mrs. Paget's door to give her the news also.

"New York is burnt to the ground"; that was the concise way he put the information, and Mrs. Paget and Imogene perceived at once the anger of God. For it is the easiest thing in the world to regard the calamities of our enemies as judgments; and very likely any Northern Abolitionist would have taken a conflagration in New Orleans to be an equally patent expression of God's anger.

This view pleased Nigel extremely. He exulted in the destruction of his enemies with a Davidic fervor. He reached home in a state

of sectional patriotism which led him to regard his marriage almost as a sin against his land and his people. He felt, doubtless, as the Israelites felt who married the beautiful daughters of Heth, and then suffered conscientious scruples concerning their weakness.

Jane was sitting in a rocking chair before the fire when he entered her presence; Palma was on the floor playing with little Paul. There was a gurgle of baby laughter, a soft refrain of conversation between the mother and the nurse, and the crackling of the cedar logs burning and blazing upon the hearth. The sounds were all low and pleasant, but they were not in sympathy with his excited mood. He said sternly to Palma, "Take your young master up-stairs"; and then he sat down beside Jane.

But the smile his entrance had evoked was now gone. She was offended at the curt dismissal of her child. She said coldly, "Supper will be ready in half an hour," and then she resumed her gentle rocking, with her eyes sadly fixed upon the smoke curling up the chimney.

"Jane, New York is in ashes. Your father has lost forty thousand dollars."

"Oh, Nigel! It is not true! Surely, it is not true! How did you hear it?"

"From your own father," and he tossed the letter into her lap.

"You have opened this letter, Nigel. You are welcome to read all my letters, Nigel, but I do want the pleasure of opening them—especially when they are from my father."

"Self-preservation is the strongest of all motives. Letters that come from the North I shall always open. I cannot afford to lose any more slaves. I am quite sure you know something about running off the boys Alexander and Stephen, but you will give me no satisfaction on the subject."

"You mean your father's two sons? I may as well tell you; I have heard all of that shameful story, Nigel."

"I mean my slaves, Madam."

"About those unfortunate boys, I will at least give you this satisfaction. I think whoever ran them away to freedom did you the greatest possible kindness. They saved you from committing an infamous and unnatural crime. If your wife is of any value in your sight, they saved you your wife and child; for assuredly, had you sold your own flesh and blood, and I known of the fact, I would no more have lived with you than I would live with a murderer whose hands were red with blood. This is the truth."

"I am glad to know it. Permit me to say, I shall sell Palma and July at the first good opportunity. If you choose to leave me, you can. I shall not, however, suffer you to take

my son away. I will have him reared in the principles I profess and believe in."

Jane's heart trembled, but she occupied herself with her letter, and when she had finished it she covered her face with her hands and wept.

"It is a judgment!" he said. "It is a plain God's judgment on New York. I am glad the city is burnt, very glad; so are the Pagets."

"So you opened my letter in order to give them its intelligence first. Nigel, you have committed such a crime against your own wife as could never have entered the mind of a gentleman. Until you admit your fault, and apologize to me for it, I will not speak to you."

Then she left him alone with his many-colored thoughts, each one chasing and displacing the other. He ate his supper in solitude; he smoked and meditated on all kinds of petty revenges. He had but a moment or two of softer feelings; and when they led him to the room in which he knew Jane was, they fled away at the sound of her voice, cooing and singing to his son instead of to himself. Yet he partially opened the door and looked in. The child was undressed; Jane held it in her arms; he could see the soft, yellow curls of its little head; he heard it make a sweet, murmuring sound to her low singing, and he listened awhile to her lullaby:

Sleep, little Paul, for, only think,
A lovely angel dressed in pink,
That never comes when it is light,
Is waiting now to say "Good-night."

Just shut thine eyes, and thou wilt see
Her smiling face bend down to thee,
To kiss and bless thee in thy sleep,
And give thee golden dreams to keep.

Lie still as little birds that dream;
Lie still as lilies on their stream;
Lie still as unsung hymns of joy;
Lie still—lie still—lie still, my boy!

He closed the door and hesitated; and to hesitate about a good act is generally to give it up. But he went away smiling. He saw that Jane loved her son, and he perceived, from the silent way in which she had accepted his threat of separating her from him, that he had a powerful means of compulsion in his keeping.

We know so little of the heart that lies nearest to us! Jane was silent, because she intended to act, aud not to talk. The threatenings against Palma and July would have been sufficient to urge her to some action; but when she perceived that the thought of dividing her from her little Paul was already in his mind, she needed no further stimulus to movement of some kind. She must go to her father first. He was her best adviser.

But how was she to get to New York? Nigel had evidently considered the subject of revoking the deed which made Palma her own prop-

erty. She did not understand if this could be done without her consent, but she feared it—feared, at any rate, the misery that must come, both to herself and Palma, if it was brought to dispute. Then there was poor little July, whose life had become a daily torture; she could not leave her. Yet, if Nigel permitted her to visit New York, he would certainly not allow any of the slaves to attend her.

That night she said nothing to Palma of the new threat. Besides, the house was thinly built, and Nigel was always prowling about, watching and listening. She decided, if the next morning was fine, to take Paul for a walk, and in some open place consult with the poor girl whose freedom was at stake; despair often evokes some latent sense, strong for the occasion. Jane resolved to call upon this desperate counselor.

The morning was fine enough for her purpose—one of those soft, warm days that are common in a Southern January. But she was melancholy, and fatigued with the somber terrors that pursue anxious souls through the shadows of the night. And there was no sunshine—only a gray, warm, misty atmosphere, streaked by long flights of crows calling harshly to each other. They left the house just as a man belonging to Mrs. Paget galloped furiously into the yard. Jane went the more hastily onward, avoiding the garden, and taking

almost unconsciously the path down the avenue on which the negro cabins stood. All was quiet there; men and women were away at their tasks. But as they approached a larger log hut, Jane heard the faintest, sweetest, mournfulest shadow of singing that ever fell upon mortal ears. "The little children," said Palma, in answer to her questioning look.

As they came nearer to the cabin, the soft, musical cadences were more distinct, but still low, and inexpressibly sorrowful. They paused, naturally, at the open door, and Jane looked in. About thirty little ones were in the room, all dressed alike in coarse garments, all sitting upon the earthen floor, patting their small black hands, swaying their small bodies, and singing together in such strange, pitiful tones as could only come from the hearts of children who had never known a childish joy—children amazed and terrified at their unsought life, submitting to evil fate as dumb animals do, troubled, wondering, uncomplaining.

De little chillen's feet so weary!
So weary, so weary, Lord.
De little chillen's feet so weary, Lord!
Call de little chillen, Lord.
Come! Come! Little chillen, come to Me!

Jane could not endure the sad, heart-breaking song. She went in and called them to her, and sent Palma to the house for cakes and sweets, and begged Mammy to let them go out

and play. But the favor seemed so shamefully small and their amazed pleasure in it cut her to the heart. She went away unable to restrain herself, and amid low weeping and exclamations against the wrongs she saw everywhere, she told Palma of the new danger approaching her.

They talked long over the subject, but could find no light on it, and could come to no decision. Still, its discussion had broken up their minds as the plow breaks the field. They knew now their limitations, they were ready to seize events. And the moving event was close at hand.

When they returned to the house there was a strong sense of something unusual. Jane was told that Master Nigel had gone to the Pagets as fast as his horse could carry him. And the servant who had come for him, without daring to speak, had given to his fellows on the Forfar place an intimation of tragedy and death. Jane turned up her little nose contemptuously—"More abolition scare," she said to herself. "I never saw such a lot of conscience cowards."

In about an hour, while she was still nursing her anger and contempt, Nigel returned home. He was in as hot haste as when he left it. He sought out Jane at once and said:

"Jane, this is no time for you to indulge your temper. Mrs. Paget is dead. Imogene

wants you to lend her some of your fine linen to lay out the corpse. For some reason they are out of a supply."

"She must have died suddenly?"

"In a moment."

"How?"

"July had disobeyed a strict order, and she was punishing her—and fell dead. It is awful!"

"Fell dead! with the whip in her hand! I am glad of it. God called her in the very act of her sin. Let her answer to Him for her cruelty. Miserable woman! No! I will not suffer her to touch anything I possess."

"Give me the key of the linen-press. I shall take what I want."

"Give them, then. You shall not bring them back here. I will throw them into the fire if you do."

"There is no use in such heroics, Jane. I have heard them too often to be moved by their false sympathy. And you simply *must* go to the Pagets. The whole neighborhood is there, or will be; your absence will make a great scandal."

"I simply will *not* go. There is no power on earth can make me go—voluntarily."

"I say, you shall go."

"We shall see."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT FARED THUS.

"And I know not
Which way to look or turn. All near at hand
Is turned to evil; and upon my head
There falls a doom far worse than I can bear."

"And over Icarian wave,
Coming with will to save,
May Delos' king Apollo gloriously advance!
Yes, the dark sorrow and pain
Far from me Ares hath set.
Io Pan! Io Pan! once more,
And now, O Zeus! yet again,
May our swift-sailing vessels be met
By the dawn, with clear light in its train."

JANE did not go to Mrs. Paget's funeral. Before the time for the ceremony arrived, she had made Nigel understand that the negative offense of her absence might be better than the positive way in which she would be certain to express her feelings if she was compelled to go. Perhaps also he had some doubts as to his power of compelling attendance. At any rate, she remained at home; and before Nigel returned she had heard all about the event, July having stolen away, during the subsequent confusion and excitement, to see her sister. The child was almost

desperate. Miss Imogene said she was her mother's murderer. She had heard rumors that she was to be dreadfully punished, that she was to be sold up the country, that she was to go to the slave market at New Orleans—all kinds of undetermined terrors haunted her childish heart, and she thought it a miraculous comfort that she managed to weep for an hour on her sister's breast, and reach her miserable place again undiscovered.

"The funeral is over," said Palma gloomily. "July says all the neighbors were there, and many people from Memphis; and the minister made an address, and said she was a shining light, and a fine example of a good Christian."

Jane looked up at Palma. Her face was white and swollen with weeping, and her eyes were the eyes of angry, hopeless despair.

"What do you think, Palma?"

"I think she *was* once a cruel, wicked woman, and that she is *now* a spirit in everlasting pain."

The idea of flying from a life that had become intolerable had taken possession of Jane; she was attent to every movement, and ready to seize the first opportunity, but nothing occurred for a week likely to help her. Then, one day, Nigel received a letter telling him that his factor in New Orleans had been stabbed to death in a duel, and that his interests required his immediate presence in that city. He was

angry at the intelligence, but thought it best to act as advised. A boat was leaving in two hours, and he made haste to catch it. Every one was running hither and thither at his orders; but in the midst of his excitement he did not forget to charge Mr. Clay to send July to New Orleans with the next gang that left Foster's market.

Jane remonstrated; she said Palma would be of no use to her if July was sold. She used every argument she could think of; she asked permission to buy July herself; she tried again the pretty, coaxing arts which had once been effectual for her desires. Nigel listened to her with an angry, silent impatience. Finally, when Jane had no plea but tears left, he said:

"You should have gone to the funeral. If you had, I would have given you the little imp of Satan. Now I intend to sell her into the blackest bondage I can find for her—body and soul. She shall pay for her devilish tempers. I promised my friend, over her coffin, to attend to July, and I mean to do so."

Then Jane dried her eyes, and thought only of preventing such a fiendish revenge. And, brave as she was, she resorted, in the first place, to such deception as would allay suspicion.

"I have done my duty now, Nigel. My hands are clean. If you like to undertake such

a piece of cruelty, I cannot prevent you doing so. But at least sell Palma with her sister."

"I intend to sell Palma, but not with her sister. Oh, no!"

"You gave Palma to me."

"The gift was never legalized. I can revoke it."

"I do not understand your conception of honor."

"Bring Paul here, and let me kiss him. I have no time for senseless talk."

Very soon after Nigel had left, a negro woman belonging to Paget Place, brought back the linen borrowed by Miss Imogene. She entered the room with it in her hands, and, giving a polite message of thanks, was about to put it upon the table. Jane arrested the intention by an impetuous movement. She said angrily:

"Throw it upon the fire! and tell Miss Imogene nothing but fire could purify it."

The woman instantly obeyed the order, and the white bundle fell among the blazing cedar logs, and made a dull flame, and then a heap of black tinder. And the two women, one white and free, one black and bond, stood watching it burn; Jane with a still anger, the slave with a sullen joy, and large lips muttering: "How long, O Lord! How long, O Lord! how long?"

That night Jane slept none. She was tossed

and tormented by schemes of escape which she had no power to carry out. In fact, she had no money, and there were then none of the facilities for procuring it from a distance which now exist. Before she could hear from her father, Nigel would have returned. She could not sell her jewels in Memphis; the act, coupled with her known dissatisfaction, would arouse suspicion. And yet she *must* go—and she *must* save Palma and July.

She thought until she arrived at the point when thought is no longer possible, and apathy and sleep invade the weary mind and heart. It was then daylight, and, as she lay unconscious, the door was opened for her, even by her husband's hand. He had forgotten in his hurry a most important business engagement, and at the first stopping-place he induced a boy to ride back with a letter to Jane.

She rose to receive it. It had evidently been written in a great hurry, and the small, cramped letters were difficult to decipher:

Dear Jane:

I forgot that Thompson's bill falls due to-morrow. You will find the gold for it in the drawer you know of—third left-hand side. Give it to Clay; he will settle the matter. In drawer number two, right-hand side, there is a package of three hundred and twenty dollars; let Clay give it to Foster to bring to me when he brings July. I shall require it in buying another man for the planting. I am sorry we parted so coldly; when I return we must try and come to some better understanding. Kiss Paul for me. NIGEL.

Wedded love has a marvelous vitality, and this slight acknowledgment of wrong, this pale expression of affection, made Jane's heart glow and soften. She was determined to use the power this letter gave her, but she dreamed also of her husband's forgiveness; of inducing him to leave the South and enter into some business in New York. She hoped her father would bring such a thing to pass; she was, in fact, strong to work out her own idea of righting a dreadful wrong; she was not strong enough to suffer and to wait in patience for God's time and God's way.

She stood still a few minutes with the letter in her hand, and during that short interval her plan was fully formed. She was going to take a terrible risk, a risk that meant, if she failed, for Palma and July slavery, for herself certain and irrevocable separation from her husband. She turned to the waiting servant.

"Awaken Mr. Clay. Tell him I wish to see him as soon as possible. Tell him there is an important letter from Master Nigel."

Then she dressed and went down-stairs. The parlor was yet cold and cheerless; she sent for the boy who had brought the letter, and was questioning him when Mr. Clay arrived.

"Good-morning, Mr. Clay. Here is a messenger from Mr. Forfar. He says he was promised four dollars. Will you ask him for any

information he has, and if you think it right pay him the money?"

The overseer turned to the boy—a tall, shambling, tawny youth—and was satisfied with his report. He paid him his wage and sent him away. Then he looked at Jane for the message brought. He had a loyal admiration for her; in some respects he thought as she thought; his manner was at once kind and respectful, and Jane felt its unspoken friendliness.

"Mr. Clay, I will get you the money, and you are to pay a bill due a man called Thompson"; she read the instructions about it as far as they referred to Mr. Clay, and then looked in his face. He nodded gravely; it was evident that he understood the affair. "And, Mr. Clay, you are to help me to take the first boat down the river—and I am to bring July with me! Oh, Mr. Clay, I am afraid she is to be sold! Is there no way of saving her? Surely you can manage it."

He shook his head sympathetically.

"I wouldn't try to prevent it, Madame—no use—she will be better off anywhere else."

"But Palma will break her heart."

"No—no one does; trouble dies if it isn't nursed."

"Oh dear, what shall I do? I cannot be a partner in such cruelty!"

"I will take the girl to the boat. Perhaps—perhaps——"

"What, Mr. Clay?"

"Perhaps you might induce Mr. Forfar to sell Palma with her sister. I should think he would find it impossible to deny you that if you wished it."

"Thank you, Mr. Clay. I do wish the sisters to be together. You know about their mother? Yes, I see you do. It is all so terrible. I will pack a trunk and get the child ready; will you attend to all else?"

"I will do everything I can: and, Madame, you must try and not feel for what you cannot help. I had to learn that lesson, I assure you."

Jane put out her hand and mutely thanked him. Then she asked, "How soon will there be a boat?"

"This afternoon—the 'Alphonse Soule'—a very good boat. You had better try and catch it. But you must be at the dock about three. Can you?"

"Yes. You will bring July, then?"

"On second thought, I think, if I were you, Madame, I would tell the girl myself. She is sure to suspect, and may make a scene. Tell her Palma is to be sold with her. She will be glad to get away if Palma is with her."

"Very well. But you will go with us to the boat. I should like it."

"I will see you safely on board. The carriage will be ready at half-past one."

"Thank you."

She had thanked him already a thousand times by her constant gentle manner; her courteous treatment; her never-failing recognition of his social existence. He busied himself in preparations for her comfort, and, amid all the hurry incident to a journey, found time to ride into Memphis and attend to Thompson's bill, so that Jane might take the assurance with her.

In a few words she made Palma understand that they were on a desperate journey; that her own and July's freedom was the end of it; but she did not discuss the subject with her. She was yet uncertain of everything but her own intentions; and she felt that she must not talk away her enthusiasm. She moved like a woman in a dream; she was quiet, swift, commanding.

At three o'clock they were all safely on the boat—they were going down the river. Mr. Clay had lifted his hat in farewell, and was riding back to the plantation, chewing tobacco furiously, either to aid or to quiet his thoughts. Unconsciously, Jane was feeling a little hard at the compulsion laid upon her—unconsciously resenting alike the swift conscience and the kind heart which urged her to resign her love and home for an ideal of mercy and justice. She had many fleeting doubts, many sharp pangs of wounded affection; she was heart-heavy, and there was a great strait before her,

ere she could say to the cowering girls, regarding her furtively with large sorrowful eyes—"*You are safe.*"

When they reached New Orleans it was dark. They went at once to the pier at which the New York packets lay; and Jane paid the stewardess to permit them to come on board. But the ship did not sail until the afternoon of the following day, and during the long hours of tension and anxiety Jane sat motionless, hour after hour. The strain of listening and waiting was agonizing. She ate nothing all day, she scarcely spoke a word; all her strength was needed for the cruel suspense she had to endure. Palma and July also felt the extremity of mental fear. A tap at the cabin door made July shriek. Palma was on the point of losing consciousness several times; and about two o'clock in the afternoon Jane's strength failed; she dropped into a deep sleep of exhaustion. When she awoke it was dark, the ship was afloat—was some way down the river; they could already feel the salt breath of the sea.

Then she wept tears of joy, she thanked God, she took her baby in her arms, she kissed Palma and July, and told them they were truly on the road to freedom. "Kneel down, both of you, and thank God; then sleep till daylight; sleep sweetly; sleep as you never slept before; no one now shall wake you to slavery."

They arrived in New York early one cold

morning, at the end of February. Jane went at once to her father's house. John Paul had just finished his lonely breakfast; he was standing at the window looking at the gray sky, and predicting snow, when the carriage stopped at his garden gate, and then, while he was still wondering at the circumstance, drove up to his door. He went to open it, and found Jane on the step, with little Paul in her arms.

With a glad cry he took them to his heart; then he paid the carriage and shut his recovered treasure within his home. He was laughing and crying and talking all at once. He had the child in his arms as he gave one order after another—for breakfast, for fires, for the cradle in the garret to be brought down-stairs.

The wonder and joy had been so great that for a few minutes Palma and July were forgotten. They stood together at the end of the room, silent, their hearts full of their lost mother, and of grand-looking white father, who had always been so kind to them. John Paul suddenly became conscious of their presence, and he looked inquiringly at Jane. For both, though very handsome, were poorly dressed; and beauty unadorned is unadorned, and not adorned the most. Jane was in a momentary dilemma. What was to be their position? Her kindest thoughts, however, were her quickest thoughts, and she said:

"They are Palma and July Forfar; Nigel's

half-sisters. They were to have been sold as slaves, and I have brought them to you, father, for succor and salvation."

"Come here, my dears," and he kissed them kindly. "No one shall hurt you. Take my word for it."

Palma slipped upon her knees and kissed his hand, and July began to cry.

He lifted the girl at once, and drew July close to his side, and Jane uncovered the child's shoulders, and showed him where the lash had cut away the flesh and scarred the slender arms. He burned with anger, and as Jane told in rapid words, with impetuous pity and streaming eyes, the story she had just lived through, the old man was aflame with wrath. "Only God can judge such wrongs! Only God!" he cried, and then he accepted still more fully the charge of their care and safety.

On talking more confidentially with Jane, he said, "You must go a little while into hiding, my girl. That man will be here anon, and take little Paul from you. Oh, he can do it! I have thought of everything. I will go with you. We will make Liverpool first, and leave Palma and July in their brothers' care. Then, my Jane, we will travel by our two selves, from country to country, for one year; or we will stay 'where the broad ocean leans against the land'—that is Holland, my dear; I have some

cousins there yet, and they will make us welcome; I know they will."

"Father, you are very good to me. Can you leave your business so long?"

"You are my business, Jane, at present. But, indeed, I have little business since the fire. I have my stores to rebuild, and to-day I will see the architect, and leave all in his charge. Indeed, I am sure it will be a good thing for me to be away till New York is herself again."

For a week, at least, they might consider themselves secure. Mr. Clay, certainly, had not a suspicion. He was not likely to write to Nigel, and Nigel was expecting Foster with July, and would not be likely to write to Clay until he found Foster brought neither July nor money. Then his letter of inquiry would have to be answered. All this would take time, and it was probable that Nigel, even then, knew nothing of the flight of his wife and his slaves.

The greatest danger was over when they were not discovered in New Orleans. For there, if Nigel had happened to meet the captain of the "Alphonse Soule," the latter would have certainly spoken of Mrs. Forfar coming down the river with him. Everything had rested for a few hours on the chance of these two men not meeting. But that fear was now past, and Jane believed no danger possible for at least another week.

She went out and bought suitable clothing for a winter voyage, and then called upon Virginia. It was a sad surprise. Jane spent the whole day in the recital of her sufferings and in the discussion of the position in which she found herself. She met with a sincere sympathy, and yet she was conscious that Virginia did not quite approve of her conduct to Nigel.

"What would you have done?" she asked anxiously, and Virginia could not say what she would have done; only, she thought, she would have put her husband always first. But Virginia was much in love, and very sensitive to the rights of love; she was judging Jane from the lofty standpoint of her own ideals, and no experience had yet taught her that ideals are often poor measures for facts.

Nothing was said of Virginia's intended marriage. Jane spoke of Captain Bradford's assistance in the matter of the boys Alexander and Stephen, and she listened to the details of their rescue with a slight enthusiasm. But there was a danger past, and the danger present made the danger past of small interest. She remembered also, in a vague way, what Harry had said about Virginia's supposed engagement to Captain Bradford, but as Virginia did not mention the subject, she had no desire to open it. Her own trials were so pressing, the troubles of matrimony so real, a love-affair ap-

peared an almost childish pleasure—a pleasure a very long way behind her.

She stayed until dark with her friend, but they parted without real grief. Jane thought Virginia had been not only a little severe about the loyalty of wives, but also rather indifferent about little Paul. She told her father so, and Mr. Keteltas excused Virginia on the ground that she had no practical idea of the conditions of wifehood and motherhood. "She is in a paradise of love, my dear, and the serpent has not yet entered it—and I hope never will—I am sure I do. Virginia is a good girl."

And Virginia on her part had the sensation of being rudely awakened to some sorrow. A strange ominous depression invaded her own happy dreams. In three months she hoped to be herself a wife. In three months the blissful time of wooing would be over. She felt almost angry that these last days of love's probation had been so forcibly tinged with such dark matrimonial shadows. Jane's doleful prognostications seemed to invite trouble, and it was hard to escape the unfortunate atmosphere she had brought with her. For no one likes to see an unhappy wife: she affronts their ideal, or darkens their hopes, or asks them for sympathy they do not give without some mental reservation.

Jane was very sensitive to this reservation. "Let us go away as soon as possible, father,"

she pleaded. "I do not think any one but you is really glad to see me."

John Paul was ready to grant her request. In fact, he had long suffered from a self-accusation he could find no apology to mitigate. When Jane's first letters of dissatisfaction came, he answered them rather sternly; he reminded her of her duty, and urged her to make the best of circumstances she had voluntarily chosen. But even while so writing, he was compelled to reflect that he himself had not only urged and hurried on the marriage, but also willfully suffered Jane to be misled in the very matter which had wrecked her happiness.

And, examining himself still more closely, he sorrowfully admitted certain matrimonial intentions of his own at the time, which he supposed would be advanced by Jane's settlement. True, they had come to nothing; yet, if they had never existed, he believed he would have delayed Jane's marriage for a year. There were other circumstances which had operated against Jane—circumstances relating to money, of which she knew nothing at all—entanglements going back to the days of Nigel's father. He now asked his conscience questions he ought to have asked it long ago, and the answering of them made him very severe with himself, and very tender with his daughter.

Immediately after Jane's return to him, he

wrote to the deserted husband. He sent back the money Jane had taken for her traveling expenses, and said :

Dear Nigel :

Jane has come home to me. She is ill, and looks ten years older than when you married her. That is all wrong. There has been a great mistake made, and I am going to take her to Europe for a year to think it over. When we return to New York, you two must begin life entirely anew. I doubt if Jane can ever go to the South again ; well, then, I have so much interest in the property there as to give my voice for its sale. I am a rich man, and can help you as well in one place as in another. Jane's happiness is the first thing ; all must bend to that. I will take good care of your wife and son, and I trust bring them back in better case than I find them at this present. Then, come to New York, and let us talk the past and the future wisely and kindly over. Jane sends her love, and I am still your true friend,

JOHN PAUL KETELTAS.

A few days after the posting of this letter Jane was at sea. Crossing the Atlantic in winter is seldom a pleasant experience, and all of the party suffered from cold and from the many insufficient comforts of a sea voyage at that date. They were nearly five weeks on the water. But at length the low water of the Mersey was visible, and the port of Liverpool made. The weather was very unpleasant and gloomy. They only delayed long enough to put Palma and July in their brothers' care, and then hastened to the south of Europe.

But though many happy months were spent, neither was heartily satisfied. Jane felt the

inextinguishable longing of love. Away from Nigel she found many excuses for him; indeed, she came to the conviction that all his faults arose from his environments. And John Paul longed for New York until the longing became a real nostalgia. The grand streets of European capitals bored him; he wanted to tread the bright, gay Broadway of New York. The American skies haunted him like a dream; he could feel the fresh breeze blowing across Manhattan Island. He fancied himself among the busy crowds in Wall and Pearl and South Streets. He longed to hear the objectionable name of Andrew Jackson; to find some one interested in the United States Bank to argue with would have been far better to him than all the operas ever sung.

Jane perceived this growing sickness, and understood it. She also shared it, and one day she asked herself why it should be any longer borne? John Paul stood at the window of the hotel, gazing mournfully into the mournful square. The air was thick with November fog. The sky was not visible. She knew by her own heart that he was dreaming of New York in the bright days of the Indian summer, feeling the soft airs and the mellow sunshine of that heavenly season all around him. She divined also that he would not complain; nor take any step to hurry their return, and she said, with a sudden eagerness:

"Dear father, let us go back to New York. What are we here for? Let us go back to New York to-morrow—to-day—in an hour. I can be ready."

"Oh, Jane! Do you really think so?"

"I long to go home."

"So do I."

In a couple of hours they were on the road to Liverpool. There a short delay was unavoidable, but it was brightened by a visit to the happy family they had saved from a fate worse than death. Both John Paul and Jane recovered a healthy cheerfulness in the pretty home which sheltered it—a little brick house in a quiet street, but Alexander and Stephen had united their purses in its furnishing, and Palma kept it with a beautiful care and economy. July was going to school, and happy as a bird in spring-time; it was indeed hard to believe that the slave child and the free child were identical.

As they left the house forever, Jane turned her head for a last look. The two boys and Palma and July stood on the steps watching them away. The tall, slender figure of Palma struck her most. Palma still wept for her lost mother; still felt the shadow of slavery. John Paul looked steadily at the four and then at his own daughter. She had paid the cost of their freedom. "Every good thing has its price," he thought; "some one—God or man

—pays for it. Has Jane paid too much, I wonder?" Then he felt a sentiment of holy pride in the fact that she had been able to lay down her love and her own hopes for the salvation of those ready to perish. There was something like the love of God in it—something better, surely, than the love of Nigel Forfar. He looked at Jane with a new respect; he understood now the serenity and the gravity that made her beauty so much finer.

Their voyage home was long and rough; it was after Christmas when they reached Sandy Hook and ran up the Stars and Stripes. John Paul happened to be on deck when the ceremony took place. Cold as it was, he could not bear to lose a single landmark; and when the familiar slip was reached, his feet tingled with the desire to tread it.

When he left New York, houses were very scarce; and he rented his home to an old business associate for a year. The time was not out, and until some arrangement could be made, he was compelled to go to a hotel. But that was a small matter. He was in New York again, and all other troubles were manageable from that vantage ground. They landed about noon on a clear, cold, sunny day, and went to the City Hotel.

In an hour John Paul was on the street; was renewing his business relations, and gathering together the dropped threads of his

usual life. He came back at nightfall, delighted with everything. All was going well. New York was better than ever. He had the promise of his own home in two weeks. His stores were rebuilt and occupied. On the next day he would resume the methodical life which satisfied him far better than idling long days away among pictures he did not understand, and among people who had never heard of General Andrew Jackson, and who had even very dim and unworthy ideas of the great United States, and no conception at all of the tremendous questions then agitating its sovereign people.

It was just three years since Jane's marriage. She was sitting in the comfortably warmed room at twilight, playing with her child, and thinking of the anniversary. Involuntarily she said, "Poor Nigel!" At the close of every train of reflection the exclamation came as a natural conclusion. She caught up Nigel's son, and kissed him to the memory of his father. At that hour she thought there had been a great cruelty in the fate which set her between her husband and a duty so evident and yet so fatal to her happiness. They who cross Destiny have sorrow enough. Had she crossed Destiny? Had she done evil to herself that good might come to others? The good she had seen, but was the root of bitterness to remain with her? She was troubling

herself with such thoughts when John Paul returned.

It was near the supper hour. The guests were gathering in every room. The hotel was ablaze with light and comfort, and the large parlors were full of richly dressed women. Jane felt the unconscious stimulation of numbers. She was affected also by her father's radiant face and manner.

"Come, Jane, put on that splendid dress of *tigrive* you bought in Paris. You will see many old acquaintances. I want you to look well, for there is no necessity to tell the world that Nigel and you do not understand each other." Jane looked approvingly at the purple silk she wore, but John Paul shook his head. "You look handsomer in the *tigrive*."

So, to please her happy father, she left the child with its nurse, and arrayed herself in the thick, soft, levantine satin, figured like a dull, rich tiger-skin. It had long, loose sleeves, and the gold bands encircling her arms and throat and gleaming in her hair were exceedingly handsome and becoming. John Paul took her on his arm with great pride. He wished by her splendid appearance to put a stop at once to all suspicious questions or suppositions.

His plan appeared to be quite successful. A great many old acquaintances met and welcomed her home; and not one of all dreamed that the richly attired, brilliant woman carried

a heavy heart beneath her silken vest. With a cheerful abandon that was at least unselfish, she fell graciously into her father's mood. She put on the face and smiles and manners of a happy wife, and the affectation brought her a passing sense of the reality.

As they passed through a long, brilliantly lighted corridor, Jane saw the nurse advancing with her son. She stooped slightly, and stretched out both her arms to the toddling little babe. Her face was shining with maternal love. Her splendid robe and golden ornaments and coronal of light hair gave to her small figure a transfiguring beauty. John Paul stood by her side admiring his daughter, and lovingly watching the short, swaying steps of his grandson.

It was at this moment a tall, dark man opened a door close by Jane's right hand, but slightly behind her. He also stood watching the exquisite tableau, but only for a moment or two. Then he stepped between the mother and son, and said one word:

"Jane!"

"Oh, Nigel! Nigel!" and she forgot the child—forgot her father—forgot the whole world, and found somehow, in a moment, every one and everything in her husband.

John Paul greeted him a little coldly, and then went away. He felt it was best to leave Jane alone in the first hours of the reconcilia-

tion he was sure would follow. He went down into the office and talked without interest of the things which had been all day of such great interest to him. This matrimonial problem was to face again, and it was harder than any business question. He would not force it, however; they must send for him, then he could stand on the defensive side and guard Jane's interests best.

It was some hours before Nigel came to him. "Go and speak with Jane," he said; "she cannot sleep until you do." He went with a singular reluctance. As he climbed the stairs he felt as if he was walking into a great darkness. He could not by any effort compel the appearance of even a decent pretense of satisfaction in the reconciliation. And yet he told himself that it was the end most desirable—the end he really wished.

Jane was very happy. She leaned her head on her father's breast, and said "Nigel had forgiven her everything." She would now scarcely admit that she had anything to forgive. She had taken on her own shoulders the whole blame, and John Paul found himself compelled to treat with Nigel on this basis.

"Nigel has shown me where I was wrong," she said penitently. "Instead of complaining about the cruelties of slavery," he says, "I ought to have done something to make it better. He is sure I might have lightened the lot

of all his slaves, made their homes brighter, and taught them that obedience to law and faithfulness in duty is demanded of all—black and white. Oh, father! I am ashamed of my complaints of others when I think how much I neglected myself. But I will do better; yes, I will alter everything, with God's help."

"Then you are going back, Jane? Think twice, my girl, about that step."

"In the place where I have done wrong, in that same place I must try and put the wrong right. Poor Nigel! He says there have been the most dreadful reports about my leaving him. Though he asserted that I had gone with you to Europe, no one believed him. He has so many enemies, all ready to blacken his name, and they said shameful things about him and Miss Paget. No one would notice her; she was obliged to go to her brother in New Orleans. You see I can only put Nigel right in Memphis by going back with him. We shall be happy now. I am glad Imogene Paget is gone; yes, I can manage Nigel now."

"Jane! Jane! I fear! I fear I know not what."

"There is nothing to fear now, father. That Miss Paget made all the trouble. I am glad she is gone. I am very happy to-night, dear father, very happy."

She was indeed so happy that she felt it possible, nay, imperative, to see Virginia. At her

last visit Virginia's happiness and her own misery had been too great a contrast. She felt that she must hasten to tell her how Nigel had watched and waited for her return, how he had left all to do so, how well their love had stood such dreadful tests, how happy she was, how much happier she was going to be in the work of blessing before her. For, indeed, her happiness was not a selfish one; in the first hours of her reunion with her husband she had called to mind the desolate homes she would make pleasanter, the sorrowful women she would help and comfort.

Full of such hopes and dreams, she went to the Mason House. It struck her unhappily, for houses have a physiognomy, and in some subtile way reflect the prosperity or adversity, the joy or sorrow, of their inhabitants. Nelly Haworth opened the door. Jane looked at her with such an air of intentional satisfaction as roused in Nelly at once an antagonistic feeling.

"Well, Nelly! You here yet? I thought you were married."

"I am married, Mrs. Forfar. I hed no more sense than lots of other lasses."

"And where is John Thomas, Nelly?"

"He is living here, ma'am—minding the horses and the like."

"I thought he was a sailor."

"He is Yorkshire, ma'am, and horses comes as natural to a Yorkshire lad as water to a

duck. John Thomas were allays after horses. If he was dead, and any one shook a bridle o'er his grave, he would get up and trade or ride; he would that."

While this conversation was in progress, Nelly had taken Jane into the familiar parlor, had raised the shades a little and replenished the fire.

"I'll tell Miss Mason you are here, ma'am. She hes been varry poorly lately. I hope you may raise her spirits a bit, I'm sure."

In about a quarter of an hour Virginia appeared. Jane had become slightly offended at her delay, but when she saw the pale shadow of her former friend, every other feeling was lost in amazement and sympathy. Virginia walked with slow and uncertain steps; she was much emaciated; her whole appearance was wan, almost diaphanous. She wore a large white shawl, and Nelly followed with some furs which she carefully folded about her feet.

"You are sick, Virginia, and I never heard of it!"

"I have been sick for nine months, Jane; a little weaker every day. I do not suffer much. I am glad to see you looking so well and so happy."

"I am happy, Virginia—so happy at last! Nigel and I have come to a clear understanding. I am glad I went away; he found out when he missed me how dear I was to him."

"Ah, yes! absence tries love—cruelly tries love, I should think."

She spoke with the pathos of actual suffering, but Jane was too absorbed in her own circumstances to detect any personality in the remark. She entered into a detailed account of their travel, of her father's longing for New York, of the condition of the slaves whom she had saved, of Nigel Forfar's misery at her flight and absence, and the plans they had made for the future improvement of their people.

"We have even considered their religious education," she said, with a little conscious air of spiritual satisfaction. "Nigel cannot allow preaching, but I am to have a Sunday-school, and read to them from the New Testament."

"Would it not be better to teach them to read? Then they could find their own strength and comfort."

"Nigel says that those who can read become dissatisfied and disobedient."

"I should not wonder," replied Virginia, with a meaning which Jane did not catch. In fact, she was so anxious to impress Virginia with a sense of her great matrimonial satisfaction that she lost sight of all events not tending to that end. A joy so selfish and complaisant is a kind of affront to the sorrowful, though Jane did not intend it so. Virginia listened wearily, saying but little, and that little having rather an ethical than a personal character. And in a

certain sense she was glad when Jane went away. Her babble of things so far off from her drifting life was fatiguing; she could not catch hold of their various intents. Jane's effusiveness made her melancholy; for her own thoughts had been so strongly and definitely fixed for many months that she could not compel their attention.

As they were parting, Jane was again struck with her old companion's visible weakness, and she said once more, "I am afraid you are very ill, Virginia."

"I know I am very ill, Jane. When we part to-day, it may be a final parting."

"And you can take it so calmly?"

"I suffer, I assure you. Except in books, few human beings are able to walk into the grave with a steady cheerfulness."

"Yet heaven is better than earth, Virginia."

"Perhaps—we trust so—only its great light is as impenetrable as the grave's profound darkness."

"Yes."

"But, truly, amid all fears, there is in the soul a dauntless primitive confidence in the place we call heaven; nothing quite destroys it."

"I think so too. When I was in great trouble, I thought a great deal about heaven and its perfect bliss."

"Perhaps, Jane, things are not so perfect

there as we imagine. Heaven may be only another kind of life, with other hopes and trials, and other lessons to learn. What have any of us done to deserve perfect bliss? Can the mere act of death change us so materially? All I hope is, that 'His servants departed this life in fear and faith' may still be His servants in the other—the next life."

"You must not doubt, Virginia."

"It is not doubt, Jane, so much as uncertainty—a sea of vague thought, tinged with the moods of a sick body. A word would make such a difference. Why does God not give it?"

Jane stood troubled and restless, holding her friend's hand. Virginia's words were casting somber shadows over her own heart; she went away with a kiss and a silent pressure of the hand. Yet she could not escape the influence of her visit, and when John Paul returned at night she carried her fears and reflections to him. "I think she is dying, father. I never saw any one so changed. Is it consumption?"

"My dear, it is really a broken heart. Indeed, Jane, there is such a death. I had a sweet little sister who went to the grave in that sad, silent way. Virginia is dying of grief. And yet a word, if it could be spoken—a kiss, if it could be given—would cure her. She was to have been married last April to Captain Bradford. The 'Arethusa' left Liver-

pool some time last March ; she never reached New York. No one has met a plank of her—not a passenger or sailor has come back with the story of her fate. She has disappeared with all on board as a stone dropped into mid-ocean might disappear. I met Major Mason to-day ; he too has failed. I think he will not long survive his daughter."

"Nearly a year gone, and nothing heard ?"

"Nearly a year—and utter silence."

"Still I should not give up hope."

"Nor I. A sailor's life is made up of the extraordinary and the impossible. He may have drifted to some lonely island, or been picked up by some ship on a long cruise. But I would not suggest this hope to her, for, God knows, any conclusion is better than suspense."

A little later she told Nigel. She had said to herself, "I will not tell Nigel, because it will only be a temptation to him to rejoice over Virginia and Captain Bradford"; but in Nigel's presence the desire to please him put down all other desires. He was sitting by her side, and evidently revolving thoughts that irritated him. Her smiles met with no response ; he said he had a headache, and could not talk. Self-interest and self-pleasure will not be disciplined ; Nigel must be amused, must be pleased, at any cost, and she said :

"I saw Virginia Mason to day ; she is dying."

He looked up with attention, and she con-

tinued: "Captain Bradford and the 'Arethusa' were lost a year ago."

Then he leaped to his feet, his face alight with pleasure. "I am very glad. Serve him right! Serve him right! I must send Joe Wilkins word—upon my honor, a piece of very good news!"

"Virginia was to have been married to him last April; she is breaking her heart about his loss."

"Perfect nonsense! No woman, or man either, ever yet died of love."

"You are right, Nigel. No woman could love better than I love you; and yet, though I was very miserable when we were separated, I did not pine away and die."

"We will not allude to our separation, Mrs. Forfar, if you please. It is not a pleasant subject to me."

He spoke with a sharp annoyance and an angry face, and Jane relapsed into silence. After all, she had gained nothing by using her friend's sorrow to spice her own happiness. And her feeling of pity for Virginia turned to one of indignant self-assertion. What an affectation to die for Captain Bradford, as if she loved him better than other women loved! Nigel was her husband! They had lived together two years, and married love was strongest of all. Yet she did not affect death as a solution of their disagreement. Virginia's

condition was a kind of reproach to herself. She looked up again at Nigel's cross face, and reflected that Virginia had always made trouble between Nigel and herself. She determined to never more name her to him, and superstition effected what loving kindness could not do. Only to her father she reiterated her opinions, and John Paul answered, a little severely:

"Jane, my girl, it is not the same; no, it is not at all the same. Virginia's lover is, in her imagination, yet all perfect. You have found out that Nigel Forfar is but a very faulty man. You had a great duty to perform; very well, duty gave you some comfort for loss of love; for no one can save life or liberty, if it be only that of a little bird or a frightened animal, and not feel that divine recompense in their heart. You had your little Paul. You had change, travel, and my own true father-love; and I think you knew, also, that I had such power over Nigel as to bring him to your feet when you thought he had suffered enough. Come, come, Virginia is a sorrowful woman; we will be sorry with her—that is always right; but to judge her, that is God's part, Jane, indeed it is!"

CHAPTER XIX.

OVERTAKEN.

"And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
. . . . .
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven!
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy,
Have I not seen what human things could do?"

THE information given by John Paul in so few sentences included a tragedy which had darkened all Virginia's life and hopes. She had confidently expected Marius every day during the latter part of April; he had promised her so much, and she had faith in invincible Love; she believed all things must obey its desire. But as April drew to an end, she grew first a little vexed at her disappointment, then a trifle—a very trifle—uneasy. She sewed less cheerily, sang less at her work, and seemed to be ever listening. As May progressed the Major found it hard to bear her pitiful look of inquiry. He haunted the wharves for her sake; he talked with seafaring men; he tried, when he had lost all hope himself, to find some comfort for Virginia.

But the sweet spring days went inexorably past. May became June, June grew to hot July, and August brought into port an unusual number of ships and vessels. No one had heard of, no one had seen, the "Arethusa." Her owners grew nervous at any allusion to their loss. They had accepted it as an inevitable calamity. They had a new ship in the "Arethusa's" place; they preferred the public to forget that ships went to the bottom, or were lost at sea and never found the harbor they sailed for. Then the winter came again, and every hour Hope and Virginia faded away.

The anguish of these long days was at first passionate and strong, full of implorations and restlessness; but as her loss became certain, a still, nervous despair took possession of Virginia, and its wear and tear of life was deep, stealthy, not to be resisted. She wasted in a scarcely perceptible manner; it was only by comparing her condition with what it had been a month previously that the change was apparent—the change that was constantly going on.

So the condition which terrified Jane, and made her instantly think of death, did not strike those who lived with Virginia in the same way. The Major admitted that she was fretting, and that she was ill in consequence: but he said to himself, "Time cures all grief. In a

year or two she will forget." He was hardly conscious that her cheeks had become white like wax, that her perfect figure had lost its symmetry, that she was weak and fragile, that her once bright eyes were now nearly always dilated with sadness, as if looking far, far off into vacancy, or far, far down into the depths of the soul.

The presence of a great and constant sorrow soon makes a distinctive atmosphere. The house was pervaded by melancholy spiritual essences; it was silent, as if sealed up; the sounds of music and song and laughter had gone away from it. The Major no longer talked of politics and literature—he was watching his only child in the great crisis of her life; and he knew that Virginia was not one of those women who cry out in grief, "Let me forget," who require to be amused, and who, while fretting for one idol, are on the lookout for another to take the vacated place. He understood that she must bear her cross until it bore her; that she must dwell with sorrow until she made of it a sanctuary to dwell in—a hard lesson for youth to learn; for who, under thirty years of age, does not think, like Ajax, that they will escape every calamity, in spite of the gods?—easier for the aging and weary, for they stretch out arms to Him who is everywhere willing and able to help and to shelter.

Virginia made a great impression upon Jane,

though she did not visit her again. She could not help wondering, as she went about her shopping and visiting, how it felt to be quiet in that silent house, sitting in the shadow of a great sorrow—perchance in the shadow of the valley of death. In her troubles, Jane had always known the strength of resistance. The possibility of conquering them, or escaping from them, was her first thought. But Virginia could not fight a loss so intangible and vague. There was no one to oppose, no right to assert; she could only sit still, and try to grow strong through suffering.

And in her new-found happiness Jane could not bear to go again into an atmosphere so depressing and so ominous. She wrote Virginia an affectionate letter before leaving New York, and Virginia was vaguely pleased by its tone of love and sympathy, and sent Jane in return a note full of good wishes, and a gold bracelet that she had always admired.

Nigel looked grimly at the present. "It is worth five hundred dollars," he said. "The girl must be dying, or she would not have given it away."

In the beginning of February Nigel and Jane went South again. John Paul had a long talk with Nigel previous to the movement, and the father, with the sad intelligence of age, tried to buy for his daughter her husband's consideration. He did this so generously that, for some

time, Nigel was influenced by the gift, and by the larger promises which it included.

But, after all, he was a man who saw everything through the eyes of others, and the approbation of the set in which he lived was to him all that ambition of a loftier kind is to nobler men. He was compelled to admit that he had left Memphis in a sort of disgrace. His friendship with Miss Paget had been gravely questioned; and many asserted that its equivocal character had driven his wife away from him. And he found it impossible to discuss this subject; men declined to listen to his explanations, and he could not make them to women. On the contrary, acquaintances of the Pagets declared that Jane's abolition tendencies had caused all the trouble. There was even a whisper accusing Jane of running off four slaves; but this charge was generally conceded to be too abominable for belief. Nigel also denied it.

"My father gave the two boys their education and freedom," he said, angrily. "I gave the girls to my wife; she had a perfect right to take them North, if she wished." But Joe Wilkins and Foster had spoken, however guardedly, and it was well known that Nigel and his overseer had quarreled furiously on Nigel's return from New Orleans, and that Mr. Clay had said many things about Nigel and Nigel's household which men gen-

erally believed, though they were not discussed.

Under these circumstances Nigel was particularly anxious concerning the manner in which Jane would be received on her return. If the Wards and the Greens, the Blands and the Seftons, called to welcome her, he felt that it would be possible to overlook all her folly; for he could remind himself that John Paul had paid most liberally for the four slaves Jane had taken away from him. As for their personal disputes, he was not very averse to them. Anything was better than the apathetic indifference he had witnessed in so many homes, where the husband and wife never consulted each other, never went out together, never had the same friends or enemies, and never had any personal quarrels. Jane's flashing eyes and resolute little face was a piquant provocative; a dispute with her was something very like a domestic drama.

On the journey he was fairly attentive—he did not know then how things might turn out; the child troubled him a little, but he made an act of good-nature in tolerating the natural noise of the human animal. "You know you were once a baby, Nigel, and I daresay made just as much noise as little Paul," said Jane, and Nigel rather indignantly denied the supposition. "I was never so ridiculously petted. An old negro nurse took me in charge, and I

was fed, and washed, and taken out, and put to sleep, and nobody in the house was annoyed by me."

"Annoyed, Nigel?"

"All babies are annoying."

Jane was silent a few moments, then she said: "I shall want a nurse when we get home."

No answer. Nigel was thinking of Palma.

"Mr. Clay spoke to me once about a girl of Squire Bland's, who——"

"Mr. Clay will interfere no more in my affairs. I have discharged him."

"Oh, Nigel, he was so gentlemanly!"

"Gentlemanly! a nigger-driver!"

"He was kind and considerate, if he was a nigger-driver."

"Jane, if you will force me to talk on unpleasant subjects, you must take the consequences. Mr. Clay told me when I came home that he knew you were running away from me, and was glad of it--that he helped you all he could, and would have loaned you money if you had needed it. Indeed, he said so many insolent things that I should have challenged him—had he been a gentleman."

There was a long silence after this confidence; but the question of a nurse naturally came up for settlement as soon as they arrived at home. "Only one woman in the house is available," said Nigel; "a strange hand whom

I took for a debt against the Paget estate." He rang the bell as he spoke, and ordered Lucinda to be sent for. A feeling of rebellion rose in Jane's heart at the summary treatment of so important a question as Paul's constant attendant; and she was assuring herself that she would not accept any woman she did not instinctively trust, when Lucinda entered.

The eyes of the mother and the slave met. Jane knew her instantly. It was the woman who had brought back the borrowed linen, and at her order flung it upon the blazing cedar logs. There was a bond of sympathy already between them. Jane accepted her with no special reservations. Lucinda also appeared to be pleased with her charge. She was a large woman, with a broad, inscrutable face, not garrulous nor inclined to laughter, but walking about the room with the child on her arm hours at a time, and apparently unconscious of its weight.

"Sit down, Lucinda; you must be tired."

"I am never tired, Miss Jane."

"But Master Paul is heavy."

"Light as a feather to Lucinda."

Such conversations were frequent, but Jane found it hard to get any closer to her nurse. Lucinda believed not in any man, no, nor woman either. Jane was disappointed; she had hoped to find in Lucinda a ready helper. Her

short ejaculation above the burning linen had shown her to be religious, but when Jane spoke to her about God, Lucinda listened as an Israelitish woman might have listened to a daughter of Pharaoh praising Jehovah. In fact, the discouragements which assailed Jane on every hand were enough to daunt the most enthusiastic evangelist.

In the first place, her return had been marked by a most flattering social reception. Every family of any standing had called to welcome her. She was consulted about the fashions, and asked to show her pretty costumes, and even allow them to be copied. And it gave her pleasure to grant all such requests. She had taken some singing lessons in Paris, and she not only loaned her music, but gave many of the young girls valuable aid in its study, and for a time Mrs. Forfar was a very happy woman indeed.

But this social *éclat*, while it greatly flattered Nigel, absorbed much of Jane's time. The morning calls and evening receptions, the demands of the church and the world, left her little leisure for the care of her house, and still less for any communion with her own soul. She found also that any attempt to re-open with Nigel the subject of improving the condition of their slaves was abortive. He threw cold water on all of her proposals, either by a total want of interest in them or a total dis-

belief in their efficacy. Sometimes, indeed, he positively opposed her wishes.

She found also a singular reluctance to her interference among the slaves themselves. Her advice and help about their homes—which was the first direction her efforts took—was coldly, not to say sullenly, met. The condition of their poor little cabins was just the one thing left in their own discretion—the only point at which they touched freedom. And they did not like Miss Jane's visits and suggestions, even where the suggestions were made possible by her gifts and help. Alas, Jane did not consider the hopelessness of heart with which she had to deal! These poor women asked themselves why they should spend their resting hours in beautifying homes that were in no sense their own. To day they might put them in order; to-morrow they might be hired out, or sold away, and another woman enjoy, or destroy, the work of their weary hands.

Thus, in some way or other, all her efforts were negatived, either by conditions of the people impossible for her to change, or by conditions of her own life equally imperative. Nigel did nothing to help her; he quietly did much to embarrass her. Nobody believed in her, and those for whose sake she denied herself some pleasures, and risked many hours of marital disputing, were most of all indifferent

—were even unjust in their judgment of her attempts, and ungrateful for them.

Then the hot, languid weather returned. She was physically sick; she had no heart to persevere; all her little plans were abandoned; and she felt a sentiment of anger, mingled with contempt, for men and women so hard to influence, so ready to accept wrongs she would have fought against, even unto death. Poor Jane! she was trying to work a miracle without omnipotent power. And every day she was losing a little of that artificial power which her own willing return and her father's generosity had temporarily given her. Life settled back to its monotonous duties and commonplace claims; and Nigel reverted to his natural selfishness and irritability. Plans, ideas, feelings conflicting with his plans, ideas, feelings, were no longer tolerated, or even met with argument. He angrily ignored all resolutions of reform; "they were," he said, "merely like the unreasonable promises made to a sick child."

"You have been crying for the moon, Jane, and in order to pacify your clamorings, I promised you the moon. You ought to have known, when I promised you impossible things, that I never meant to—that I never could—perform my promises. Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" he asked, with that provoking air of infallibility a text gives to an un-

reasonable arguer. "Can you help those who will not be helped? Let the slaves alone; they are well enough satisfied."

The violation of this promise indicated the violation of others more personal. At the bottom of his heart, Nigel had never forgiven his wife the scorn, the contempt, and the humiliating gossip which he had been compelled to endure when she left him. He felt that no one thoroughly believed the explanation Jane and he had agreed to make. For the public is a good diviner, and, when all protestations are over, quietly returns to—hints, insinuates, looks—its primitive belief.

He found himself daily more unpopular, daily treated with more formal respect and less kindly familiarity; and he visited every such snub upon his wife and child. For he was not long in discovering that he could hurt Jane twice over through her mother-love. And so evil and dreadful a thing was this perversion of what was holy to sinful uses, that he began also to dislike the innocent child who was his innocent tool. He pretended to think him a trouble; he ordered him out of his presence with a sharp word, and very soon Paul hid himself in his mother's arms when he heard his father's voice, and answered even his invitations to "come to him" with sobbing terror. And then the child's fear brought anger and dislike. Though he was not three years old,

Nigel began to discipline the baby; to teach him obedience and good manners; in short, to torture Jane through the torture of her irresponsible child.

The hot, dry, windy weather intensified all these elements of domestic discord. Jane was prostrate through the long, terribly sunny days; nothing but Paul's crying or complaining could rouse her from the apathy of suffering which invaded her soul. She was in that languid state when all the wheels of life run slow; the intense green of the foliage oppressed and made her melancholy. The white, lonely cabins and the hopeless men and women trailing off from them in the morning and coming back to them at night, silent and weary, without any sense of home to come to, made her wring her hands in despairing pity. She knew, when she saw Nigel sauntering down to the quarters in the gloom of the coming night, that he was going to meet the overseer and hear his report. Not infrequently long, piercing cries came rushing through the shadows and filled her ears with aching sound, and threw her upon her knees in a passion of self-justification before God. "Father in heaven, I cannot help it! If thou interfere not, what can I do?" After such experiences it was hard to meet Nigel, hard to smile at him, hard to love him. She drew away silent, constrained, measuring in her conscience his share of the guilt.

So the hot summer passed wearily away Most of Jane's acquaintances went to the "Springs." Nigel said *they* had been sufficiently from home, and Jane preferred New York when a change was possible. She was already dreaming of and planning for a visit there. "Nigel was so much better and kinder in New York"—the poor wife yet believed his faults to be bred in him by his surroundings; if she could once more induce him to go North with her, she was determined to join her father in any plan likely to keep him there.

But these fretful, languid, unhappy days were not fruitless ones; in them, more than ever, Jane turned her thoughts to God—the only refuge for women who have loved unworthy men. She had also a brave soul, a thing which all things serve; she was far from being that vanquished character who has given up fighting for happiness, who is miserable herself and makes all others miserable who approach her. Whenever Nigel was in a mood to begin the day cheerfully, she was instantly ready to meet his mood. She had learned to keep the child out of his sight, to avoid conversation likely to irritate him, to say pleasant and complimentary things—in short, to practice all the small domestic deceptions which good wives learn, which are, indeed, a species of virtue, being the atmosphere making the existence of more real virtues possible.

And Nigel was yet occasionally sensitive to this heavenly tolerance. He understood the love which made it possible to a woman of Jane's quick temper, and sometimes it compelled him to assume a similar disposition. Why not? It is said that all who look upon the Apollo involuntarily erect themselves and put on a more dignified air; certainly, then, the gentleness of a good woman should have the same effect upon the soul. One thing is certain: gloomy, cross thoughts affect our surroundings as rain affects the atmosphere; will not kind and sunny ones have an equal power?

Toward the end of October Jane came down to breakfast one morning, and found a note from Mrs. Bland, asking her to spend the day with her. "Of course you must go," said Nigel, with a sullen air. "She is just home from the 'Springs,' and wants to boast herself to you. Let her. Colonel Bland has been very distant to me lately; try, for once, and say a good word for your husband."

"Do you think, Nigel, I ever say a bad word about you?"

"Women whimper, as a general rule, when they are together. Leave Paul at home."

"I must take Paul with me. I do not trust Lucinda. She hates all white people alike, I think."

"Pshaw! you might trust me, however."

The tone of the remark touched Jane.

Perhaps she ought to answer the longing in it. She would be miserable, but it might bring father and son closer together. In a moment such a thought flashed through her mind; in the next she answered, "Indeed, Nigel, I shall be very happy to leave Paul in your care. Please keep Lucinda in sight."

"Have no fear. Paul and I will soon make up all our old quarrels."

"And have no new ones, Nigel dear?" and she rose with the question, and looked at him with eyes so blue and tender that he felt himself the unkindness of refusing the kiss they so certainly asked.

The day was not a pleasant one for visiting, and Jane was physically very unfit for the constraint and strain of so many hours with a woman whom she felt bound to please and entertain. They talked over the company at the "White Sulphur," the dresses and flirtations and probable results. They talked of their mutual friends who had remained at home, of their financial embarrassments, and the negroes likely to change hands.

"The Colonel does not think your husband got the value of his claim upon the Paget estate in Lucinda. She is a peculiar woman, likely to lose her head again. I hear she is your nurse."

Jane was instantly sick with terror. "Has she been insane?"

"Oh, yes; I think that circumstance is generally known."

"I must go home now. I really must. I cannot be easy any longer, knowing this of Lucinda."

"The Colonel thought I ought to tell you—when we heard she was your nurse."

"Thank you; but you should have told me when I first came."

"Perhaps I should—it is difficult to interfere."

They were going up-stairs together, and it struck Jane there was something else Mrs. Bland wished to say, but she was in a hurry, and only anxious that nothing might delay her. However, at the last moment, Mrs. Bland, with a marked consciousness, said, "Mrs. Forfar, you might incidentally name to your husband that Madame Lenoir is on a visit to her mother, and that she has brought Tatelle with her. I think he ought to be aware of her presence."

"Tatelle?"

"I would not name the circumstance if you did not already know—the mother of Palma and July."

"Yes, I know, I know. Great God! how could he meet her?"

"The Colonel said I had better tell you—such subjects ought not to be opened; so many are now looking for precisely cases like that—very unjust, but it is so. You see, my

dear, in all societies there are household tragedies it does no good to reopen."

Jane comprehended little of the suave regrets and apologies Mrs. Bland kept murmuring at her side. She felt, however, the mingled kindness and selfishness of the information given; but more pressing than any other thought was the fact of Lucinda's mental condition, and the supposition that Nigel was aware of it even when he proposed her as nurse for his child.

"That is one of the evils of slavery," she muttered bitterly. "They think these poor creatures know neither love nor hate, gratitude nor revenge."

The night was really cold; the fog hid everything; there was a sense of death and decay in the air—a mournful stillness that made Jane long to shriek aloud. It was one of those hours when the most trifling anxiety takes the form of a calamity; and Jane's fears were by no means trifling. As the carriage lumbered along the desolate lane, the tall brown weeds in the wan, misty light terrified her. She spoke to the coachman, and he, not catching her words, only answered with a grin, running from ear to ear; and the bogie laughter was but a part of the whole miserable, gloomy, dreamlike hurry. She asked herself wildly, "Am I sleeping? Shall I ever get home to my little Paul? Is the man taking

the right way?" At length she saw the house, gleaming white and ghostlike through the damp and drifting fog. Lucinda came to the door to meet her.

"Where is Master Paul?" she asked angrily.

"Done gone wid Massa Nigel. Massa done took him from me 'most two hours past."

Jane did not believe the woman, and Lucinda divined her fear, and silently mocked her as she watched her miserable, hurried glance into the nursery, into her own room, into the parlor. She knew what Jane was thinking and fearing, and felt a fierce regret that was almost murder in her heart.

"Where is Master Nigel?" and she turned on the woman with something in her face that mastered her.

"Dunno, Miss Jane. He went down by de quarters."

Jane instantly followed the road her husband had taken, followed him quite to the dreadful pen, into which she had once before intruded. There was a deathly stillness until she crossed the threshold. Nigel and the overseer stood silently together looking over a work-book, and little Paul sat on the table, watching with wide-open eyes a young man crouching and sobbing in a corner. The rude horn lantern was by his side, and his baby hands were doubled up tight upon his knees:

he was evidently under a great terror, or else paralyzed with shock and pity for what he had witnessed.

Jane lifted him in her arms, though she was very unable to bear the burden, and went tottering and stumbling in a frenzied haste to the house. Any mother may imagine the scene that followed. When Nigel appeared, Jane faced him with the just indignation of a mother who feels that her child has been willfully brutalized. Nigel at first attempted to excuse himself; he had not intended taking Paul into the calaboose; it was an accident. But when he saw that Jane would accept no excuse, he asserted his right to take the child wherever he desired. He grew insanely passionate, and vowed he would have no squeamish boys brought up under his name. "He shall learn not only to see the idle punished, but to punish them himself. I shall take him into Memphis with me. He shall go wherever I go, and do whatever I do. Mind, I am going to make a Southern gentleman of him."

Indeed, Nigel lost all control over himself; the whole household were witnesses to his passion, and Jane was not able to stand before it. And, strange as it may seem, Nigel had the general sympathy; for the inner man, when he takes control—be it for good or evil—is the conqueror. The human animal respects force, and that night Nigel absolutely domi-

nated the trembling slaves around him. They admired his temper, they eagerly sought to pacify him; and neither men nor women, as they whispered together in the dark kitchen, had a word of respect for Jane.

"Miss Jane powerful stirrin' temper."

"Massa doin' no harm to de boy."

"Massa's own chile."

"*Hi!* Miss Jane find *her* massa to-night."

Of such tenor were the comments as the house gradually settled into that strange quiet which follows a domestic storm. The servants stole off to their beds, and the candles were put out in every room but two, one up-stairs, where Jane sat with clasped hands thinking, thinking, thinking, trying to find out what she ought to do; grieving most of all because she had been told that night that she was an unloved wife —that Nigel regretted that he had married her —that he longed to be free. She feared, she trembled at the visions her own imagination evoked when she thought of these bitter truths, forced by passion into a too late speech.

Nigel had a satisfaction in having at length voiced them. At any rate, there would no longer be any necessity for an affectation of affection. If Jane did not like the new era he was resolved to inaugurate, she could go back to her father. He was weary of being obligated to the old Dutchman. Nigel felt his favors to be chains around his hands and feet. He

would shake them off. Then he began to think of his debts, of his poverty, of Texas. Why not go there? Go alone. His wife's father really owned all he had—let him take it—and take his daughter also. He could get an advance from his factor, and in Western Texas live the life he longed for, that Harry enjoyed so thoroughly. He fancied he had a capacity for an open-air, hard-riding, hard-fighting camp life; *he*, who delighted in cutting his days and his employments, his dress and even his amusements, to the conventional pattern!

For there are certain moods in which we become disgusted with ourselves, lay the blame of our actions upon our circumstances, and imagine in escaping from them we shall also escape from the hateful self we have got a glimpse of. At this hour Nigel Forfar was experiencing such a revulsion against all that he had hitherto valued and observed. He was mentally spurning every domestic tie and every social demand. He was dreaming of an existence of joyful freedom in a heavenly climate. And in order to fully enjoy and follow out his dream to a practical conclusion, he lit another cigar and lay down upon a couch to smoke it.

He knew not that, from a dark angle of the piazza, the woman called Tatelle stood watching him with the hate of a wronged woman and the fury of a robbed mother in her heart.

CHAPTER XX.

FORFAR PAYS ALL DEBTS.

"But they that sin are enemies to their own life."—[Tobit xii. 10.]

"For the Lord knoweth all them that sin against him, and therefore delivereth he them unto death and destruction."—[2 Esdras xv. 26.]

"For the destiny of which they were worthy, drew them unto this end."—[Wisdom of Solomon xix. 4.]

TATELLE had followed Jane from Memphis to the Forfar place, most of the way sitting on the flat board at the back of the carriage, and perhaps, if such cause and effect were well understood, she had been a sufficient reason for the mental terrors which assailed the unhappy wife and mother. She slipped off before the gates were passed, and took her way by a devious course to the quarters. She visited only one woman, an aged negress, who recognized her step and voice in an instant, and answered it with a soft, glad whisper of:

"Tatelle! Sistah Tatelle!"

The conference that followed was one to drive the mother frantic. She heard all the story of July's sufferings, of the journey of Wilkins to New York for her sons, and she fully concurred with old Celia in the belief

that they had really been brought back to New Orleans and sold. The story of their escape was a made-up story to cover the blackness of the crime. As to the freeing of Palma and July, the idea was scouted by both. "The white woman took them to New Orleans and no further," said the enraged mother. "Liverpool! England! Ah, they put them far enough away to prevent any one finding out."

In such bitter conversation the two women sat crouching in the dark cabin. They forgot there was neither light nor fire; they did not know that the fog had changed to a soft, soaking, dismal rain; their hearts were burning with unpardonable wrong; they were in a fever of contemplated vengeance; they talked softer and softer, in sentences broken in two or finished in mysterious passes over the face or in touching of the hands.

When Tatelle left Celia's cabin, all was quiet in the big house; all was dark save in the rooms where Jane watched and feared in miserable anticipation of a woman's greatest trial, and in the parlor where Nigel lay planning his new and perfectly happy future. Tatelle hated Jane, and she felt an angry impulse urging her to settle with Jane first. She believed that Jane had been as deeply involved in the sale of her daughters as Nigel was, though she admitted with Celia that she had been forced by fear of Nigel to bring the girls to New Orleans; but

that consideration only added contempt to her hate.

She knew the house and the ways of the house; even if the doors had been locked, access would have been easy to her. But the doors were seldom locked so early, and a movement of the handle in passing showed her the way was without obstruction. She stood some time on the piazza, feeding her hate and her longing for vengeance with the sight of the man who had so foully wronged her. He lay at full length upon the sofa, with his hands clasped above his head. He had thrown off his black broadcloth coat, and his black velvet vest was unbuttoned. A candle burned on the side-board, but the main light of the room came from the large wood fire to which fresh logs had been recently added. She knew Nigel well enough to be sure that as soon as his cigar was out he would gradually cease thinking and fall asleep. She waited patiently; she felt the hate in her heart gathering strength with every moment. It was sending into her arms and hands invincible power, and she stretched them out in the dark, rainy atmosphere and looked with a fierce joy at them.

The rain dripped on the gallery floor and on the wooden steps; a chill, sad wind rose, and wandered mournfully through the tops of the big trees; the hounds in the kennels began to bay; what if they were loose? The fright

added fresh fuel to her angry impatience; she told herself, in awful words, it was the last terror he should ever give her. She was moving stealthily to the door, when she saw his arms drop; in a few moments he was asleep. She hesitated no longer. She was sure of her enemy now.

Her tall, large figure, in its wet, dark garment, glided softly up to the unconscious man; she needed no fresh stimulant to her purpose, but if she had, the complacent satisfaction of his sleeping countenance would have given her it. She took the prostrate body by the throat, firmly, pitilessly, and then threw her weight upon it. Nigel opened his eyes; they were full of agony and mortal fear.

"Where are my boys?" she whispered fiercely; "where are my boys? Where are my daughters? Oh, you thief of soul and body, you shall pay their price this night!"

He struggled for his life; he struggled desperately; but that wet, awful weight would not let him move; those hands of iron would not let him speak. But, oh! how keen was his hearing. The dreadful words she whispered in his ears did not prevent him from listening with agonizing intensity for some footstep; for some help. Oh, if Jane had only been with him when this mad woman entered! A tumult of thoughts went like billows over him, blinded, deafened, deadened all things; crept to his

heart and brain, and said to him by every sense, "*This is death.*" And at that moment she held him firmest; and, stooping her face close to his face, said, in a dreadful mutter of rage: "O wicked soul, what is passing in you now?"

She held him until her hands grew weary with the tension; until the lassitude of exhausted feeling attacked her. Then she sat down on the floor by his side and watched him. If he had stirred, her strength would have come back to her; but he never moved, he never would move again. Hour after hour passed, and the murderess watched her victim with an insane intentness. It did not enter her mind to escape. She sat still until the gray daylight, drenched in rain, came noiselessly in through the windows and found out, with surprised and awful wonder, the face of the dead man. The house was very quiet. A cry from little Paul startled all its echoes. Then a bell rang, and there was the sound of bare feet going hurriedly up-stairs.

Jane stood by the crib of her child; Lucinda was sullenly building the fire. When a girl opened the door, Jane fretfully turned to her—"How late you are this morning! Have you seen Master Nigel?"

"No, Miss Jane."

A sudden unreasonable terror turned her heart cold. "See if there is any one sleeping in the other rooms."

The girl returned in a few moments. "Nobody in any of them, Miss Jane."

"Go to the parlor, and see if Master Nigel is sleeping there. If so, make up the fire"—and she shivered and looked toward the sputtering, smoking mass Lucinda was building.

The girl came flying back, with horror in her face, but unable to utter a word. She pointed down-stairs, threw herself upon the floor, and began to roll about with hideous contortions.

In a few moments Jane stood by the side of her husband. Tatelle looked at her with the cunning hatred of insanity. Jane returned her gaze with one of passionate power. "You are a murderess!" she said. "Sit still! Do not dare to move! Reuben, Gabe, Sally, Malinda! Quick! Come here." She kept her eyes upon the crouching woman, and held her with them, until the room filled and she was secured.

"*I did it! I did it! I did it!*" The murderess said the words over and over continually with a triumphant hatred, until Jane answered her with a passion equal to her own—"You are a wicked woman! You are a murderess!"

The news spread like wildfire. Men talked it over in all their gathering places; and women spoke bitterly of Nigel Forfar for being the cause of such an outrageous vengeance. It put dreadful thoughts of murder into the minds of their own slaves. It was a dangerous example. No one knew who might do likewise.

At sunset the murdered man was buried in his own grounds. Under some great trees between the garden and the swamp there was a square acre in which three generations of Forfars slept, old and young men, mothers and maidens. A few weeks previously, on a lovely Sabbath evening, Jane and Nigel had walked there. Nigel told her incidents relating to the dead men and women; and they spent a solemnly tender hour, until Jane made a remark which wounded the easily wounded sensibilities of her husband. The inscription upon every stone began in the same way; it struck her finally, and she read aloud, in a slow, dubious voice:

"'Here rests Stephen John Forfar,' etc. Men write 'he rests,' but what do they know about it, Nigel?"

"My family lived honorable lives, Jane, and died in their beds, with all the consolations of religion. Why should they not rest? There are no wandering ghosts among the Forfars."

His tone showed great offense, and she did not take the trouble to explain her meaning. Their conversations often terminated with this air of misunderstanding, willful misunderstanding, generally, upon Nigel's part. She became silent, and when they reached the gate she passed through it. Nigel followed her. They went on a few steps, and then Jane stopped and said:

"Shut the gate, Nigel. It is not well to leave it open. It looks like—it might be needed."

"How sillily superstitious you are!"

"Perhaps all women in my case are superstitious. Shut it, to please me, Nigel."

"No, I will not humor such ridiculous feelings."

Then Jane stepped back and closed the gate, and as she rejoined him, she added, in a conciliatory voice, "I have heard my father say we should always protect graves, or else we offend the dead."

"It is as much as I can do to please the living, Jane."

"I think, also, we should wish to please the dead, Nigel; they are a great cloud of witnesses."

Trifling acts and words impress those in sorrow. That woeful day following Nigel's murder, Jane could not keep the circumstance of this visit to the graveyard out of her mind. If Nigel had shut the gate, could it have influenced his destiny? Great natural events turn upon such little things; was the supernatural affected by matters equally slight and apparently insignificant? Did Nigel, knowing her condition and her superstition, purposely leave it open, thinking, hoping—that he left it open for her? She put the doubt quickly away. "I must not think ill of the dead,"

she moaned—"he can never speak for himself."

She saw Nigel's face no more after that first awful vision of it in the presence of his insane murderess. In the late afternoon a large gathering of gentlemen carried their comrade to his place among his ancestors. The rain plashed heavily on them, and the sad autumn storm filled the air with melancholy drifts of faded leaves. Outside the fence the negroes stood bareheaded, and full of passing pity. They had had a day's rest, and they went back to their cabins to whisper about their own fates. It was the general opinion Miss Jane would sell them all. They knew she hated the South, and her sympathy had evidently not impressed them as meaning anything practically kind. They expected her to sell them.

John Paul had been sent for immediately on the discovery of Nigel's murder. He arrived soon after Jane had given birth to a daughter. The child was scarcely a day old, the mother was apparently at her last day. But John Paul's presence was like a breath of fresh strong air in a vault. It was felt throughout the house, and it set everything into healthy movement. So that when Jane was able to leave her room, and take an interest in her affairs, all were ready for her consideration.

One clear, frosty day, John Paul, coming in from a walk, found her standing over the cra-

dle of her infant. There was such an expression of pain on her face that he instantly joined her. "My dear Jane," he said, "I am sure you have a sad thought; tell it to me."

"Sad and strange, father. If I had not the proof of it, I scarcely know how you would believe it." She lifted a book lying near her and made him look at it.

"'A History of the Forfar Family to the Time of their Emigration.'" He read the title aloud, and Jane answered his questioning look.

"Yes; and, as you see, it is in old Scotch and very hard to read, but you may spell this out fairly enough:

'and because of the cruel, shameful wrong wrought on this poor orphan maid, a doom was set on all the males of Forfar—*that they should never see a daughter's face.*'

My poor little girl is a doom child. She is the first daughter born to the house since they came to America, and Nigel did not live to see her."

"My dear Jane, Nigel earned his own doom, and there is no man to blame for it but himself."

"Yea! the wrong began with his father, and the sins of the fathers are visited on the children."

"If Nigel had done right, he would not have borne his father's wrong."

"That dreadful night, as I lay asleep upon

my bed, I had a dumb consciousness that, in the dark, Nigel passed me, and that we exchanged a thought, a word, in the passing. In the morning I had forgiven him everything, everything, as soon as I awakened—before I knew that he was dead. Oh, father, what did he say to me? When his soul was suddenly dismissed into the cold, dark, empty space, where did it go? Is God any more *there* than he is *here?* What is meant by heaven?"

"Jane, my child, if you ask questions like these, you must go to my friend Mason with them. I am not wiser than what is written. I confess, though, I asked him a somewhat similar question when Marius Bradford disappeared. 'You think he is in heaven, Major; what do you mean by that?" I said these words very thoughtlessly, expecting an ordinary answer, and I was a little startled at what he said."

"Tell me."

"He turned his large, thoughtful, far away eyes upon my eyes, and spoke thus: 'My friend, when the soul leaves the body, it is of necessity in that place in the heavens where our planet is at the moment of separation. Thus we are in the heavens immediately after death, as indeed we have been the whole of our lives, only we are free from that weight which fixed us to the planet. Consider, however, that our earth travels in her orbit 26,800 leagues every hour; then in one hour how far from its late habita-

tion the soul may be?' And I answered him, 'No, my friend, I will not consider about such mysteries. I will say, into Thy hands I commit my spirit, and rest all and leave all these.' But now there is a straight, plain duty before you, Jane, and if you are well enough to think and act, the sooner we do what is right and the better the deed. Can you listen to me today?"

"Yes. I am ready to do all you wish."

"This house and land, and the men and women pertaining to it, are mine. I want neither the house nor the land nor the men or women servants. Do you?"

"I wish to go away from here and never see the place again."

"Listen then. I shall set the servants free. I shall sell the house and land, and divide the price among them. It is the wages of their body labor and their soul travail, and I will have none of it."

"I think you are right."

"The little babe is crying; lift her, and then sit down by me, and while she is in your arms we will arrange this act of justice. Though she will have no part in the good deed, it may bring a blessing on her. And, Jane, at this hour we will name her; we will call her after your grandmother, Justine Diedrich, a good woman."

So the babe Justine was of the council of

mercy, and when John Paul rose up from it he went straight into Memphis, and made an offer of the Forfar place to Nigel's late factor. The man had intimated his wish to buy, and the bargain was soon concluded; though he said that Mr. Keteltas drove a hard trade, asking full price, and taking nothing in payment but the metal coins which went by the name of "Jackson money."

In the mean time the slaves had been enjoying a kind of long holiday. One of John Paul's first acts was to pay off the overseer. Then he called the men and women together, and told them to be their own overseer, to do honest work, and sooner or later he would estimate it. They had begun to feel as if Miss Jane's rule was going to be a very good one, and to dread only lest there should be a change. "Dese times too good to last," said faithful old Toby; and when all hands were ordered to the big house on the morning of the 11th of December, the sage shook his white head, and asked sadly, "What I tole you; too good times to last."

For a muster at the big house had always been the way in which some final break had been announced. It meant separation and sorrow and change, and the tendency of middle-aged humanity is to abide the ills they know rather than try what is remote and unfamiliar.

John Paul sat by a table on which there was

a large quanitity of gold and silver coin. His grandson was on his knee. Jane and the babe Justine occupied a large chair near at hand. There was an air of pleasure and of solemn happiness on their faces. The sunshine streamed joyously into the room, the fire crackled and leaped in its broad hearth alcove. As the anxious men and women came slowly in, they felt a burden roll from their hearts; they hoped they knew not what—certainly nothing like what actually came to them.

"Men and women," said John Paul, and his voice trembled with the joy in his heart "men and women, you and your children are free! from this hour, free forever!"

There was a moment's dead silence, then a sob, a cry, a shout, that made John Paul's heart quiver, and his face shine, and the tears roll unchecked down his rosy cheeks. Jane wept without restraint; she pressed her baby to her breast, and prayed inwardly for the dear dead she did not name. Who dare blame her for an instinct so natural and so universal? Where is it forbidden that we pray for our dead? Is God's mercy so short that it reaches only earth? If we ascend into heaven, or go down into hell, can we ever get beyond his love? Jane's heart said to her, "Pray for the poor soul taken in the very midst of its premeditated sins," and she prayed, doubting nothing of the love of God.

Many of the women and some of the men had fallen on their knees. John Paul waited till the first happy shock was over, then he continued:

"I have sold the house and land, and the price of it I will justly divide among you. In two days a steamer will be waiting for all who wish to be beyond the breath of slavery. I will go with you to Cairo; I will see you safe on free soil. Does any one, old or young, wish to remain here?"

No; there was not one. Toby said, "I'se near a hundred years ole, Massa; many and evil years, Massa; but I wants to go wid you. I wants to die free."

It was well that the hurry of their departure claimed something from the amazing joy of their new condition. The first effect of overwhelming light is blindness; and the first effect of this sudden uplifting of despair and breaking of bonds was a sobbing amazement and excess of happiness that was almost sadness. John Paul instantly perceived the invasion of this soul-weakness. As the men and women began to drop down and cry out, they knew not why, he roused them by a peremptory call to duty.

"Come, come," he cried, "you have but two days to prepare. Yoke up the oxen and load the wagons with the bacon, potatoes, and corn meal laid up for the winter. You must take it

with you. And Miss Jane will divide among you blankets and bedding, and such furniture as is suitable to your condition. The 'Amelia Poole' lies at the wharf. She is waiting to take you to a new and happy life; get her loaded as soon as you can. Hurry, men! hurry! Always make the most of a good hour."

Then a passion of haste brought them back to themselves. Jane took charge of the excited women and directed their efforts. John Paul opened up the smokehouse and cellar, and saw the wagons loaded, and went with them to the wharf, lest the men should rouse popular feeling by their imprudent rejoicing. "Keep quiet, keep quiet!" he charged them. "You will have plenty of time for triumph. Freedom is not a whisper for a slave city."

He took them on board the "Amelia Poole" in the dusk of the second evening. They stole away quietly, a few by one street, and a few by another; some at one hour, others a little later. There was no stir, no noise but the gathering steam; and it was not until Memphis was some miles distant, and nothing visible but the irresistible sweep of the dark river, and the somber line of the endless woods on its banks, that a soft, low murmur of song began at the bow of the boat.

John Paul walked toward it. He saw the dusky crowd standing there, all their faces

turned one way—to the North—to freedom. Though he could distinguish neither forms nor sounds perfectly, that little congregation of lifted faces, that unexpected, sincere intrusion of droning solemn music into the still, dark night, affected him to the very depths of his nature. He saw and heard, as the angel who kept the great water-way saw and heard, for

> It is the soul that sees ;
> It is the sympathy that hears.

The days of the voyage were occupied in discussing the plans and hopes of the freed men and women. Some preferred to go to the inland towns. These were the house servants, who expected to find in hotels and private houses profitable employment. Others desired to buy land and build cabins ; these were the field hands, who had generally large families. To them John Paul gave liberally ; to each single man and woman he gave four hundred dollars. He talked to them as he would have talked to his own sons and daughters ; warning, advising, preparing them, as well as warning and advice can ever prepare a human being for the dangers and perplexities of an unforeseen existence.

It was very cold weather when they reached Cairo, but every one was on deck to catch the first glimpse of free soil. They saw it as the sun rose and sent bright rays of golden light

across the level land. To them it was the land of Canaan. They watched the boat nearing it with a silence more impressive than speech, but when the anchor fell and the gangway was laid for their crossing, a great shout escaped them.

They pressed round John Paul, they kissed his hands and his feet, they prayed, they went over the gangway shouting with gladness, and when their feet touched the free earth they knelt down and laid their lips against it, and so at last, all together, went up the steep hill singing. A tall, powerful field hand, with a red kerchief round his head, led them. His voice, like a silver trumpet, rang out, seemed to fill the horizon from east to west, and the men, women, and children followed his lead, keeping time with slow, stately footsteps and clapping their unshackled hands to the wild melody:

Hang up de sword in Zion!
My Lord, what a morning!
Hang up de sword in Zion!
My Lord, what a morning!
Ober Jordan in de morning light!
In de morning light,
In de morning light,
My Lord, what a morning!

And then again the loud, triumphant shout of the leader:

Hang up de sword in Zion!

And far, and farther away with every movement, the shrill, sweet wonder of grateful praise:

My Lord, what a morning!

John Paul stood watching and listening until the last flutter of red kerchiefs passed out of sight; until the last woman, with a babe at her breast and four little children clinging to her scant clothing, stood a moment at the turning, and, with eyes fixed upon the anchored boat, dropped it a parting courtesy. And somehow this humble, awkward tribute touched John Paul more than all else. He lifted his hat and wiped his eyes, and answered it with a word of that sudden prayer which always finds out the ear of God.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HAVEN WHERE THEY WOULD BE.

I saw a gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,
"Guess now who holds thee?" "Death," I said; but there
The silver answer rang—"Not Death, but Love!"

THE year which had been so fateful to Jane Forfar—which had seen her reunion with Nigel, the birth of her daughter, the murder of her husband, and the writing of "Finished" across the whole page of her married life, was not barren of events touching the life of Virginia Mason.

When she parted with Jane in its beginning, she thought they would see each other's faces no more. Jane and John Paul were of the same opinion. "I think Virginia will die very soon," Jane said; "she looks more like heaven than earth now." And John Paul answered, "I think with you; before a bird flies, we see that it has wings."

But in March there occurred one of those

mysterious agitations which, like the wind, come from where no man knows. A sailor who had been some time on the "Arethusa" spoke to Major Mason. He scouted the idea of Marius Bradford having been lost; "none of that kind, sir," he said, confidently, and the Major somehow transmitted a breath of confidence to the dying girl. In the settlement of a claim; in a lawsuit; in the arrest of a sailor who still wore a cap bearing the name of the "Arethusa"; in other slight and apparently far-fetched ways, the unfortunate vessel came again upon the lips of living men.

One afternoon Virginia was moved profoundly by an urgent request from Jack Rhea. For many months she had refused to see Jack. She thought he sorrowed too little for his brother; she looked upon his buoyant hope in the return of Marius as a comfortable way of putting Marius out of his mind. In the selfishness of her own suffering she had indeed done Jack much wrong.

"If I were you, I would search the ocean for him; I would not rest until I knew whether he was dead or alive." She had said these words to Jack, and felt, while saying them, a bitter, unreasonable anger when she contrasted the happiness and prosperity of one brother with the unknown, sorrowful fate of the other. Jack's satisfaction with his wife and child, and general good fortune, irritated her. His confi-

dence was an offense to her own despair; she felt that she was unable to see him, and had for many months steadily refused to do so.

But he came again one bright afternoon in February, and he urged Nelly to procure him an interview with Miss Mason. Twice that day she had heard the "Arethusa" named; the word was stirring her heart when Jack called; and she suddenly resolved to see him. He came into her presence with an air at once solemn and hopeful. He was not so oppressively full of life and joy and confidence. She put out her thin white hand, and welcomed him kindly.

Jack drew his chair close to her sofa. "Virginia," he said, "my father died this morning. We brought him to us a year ago, and Carrie had learned to love the dear old man very much. He was so fond and proud of her and of our little Maria. He died this morning."

"Poor father! Grief kills the aged more mercifully than the young. How he must have mourned for Marius!"

"No. He always said Marius would come home. He watched every day and every hour for him; he was certain he would live to see Marius."

"And then to be disappointed, even to the last moment!"

"Virginia, he was not disappointed. This morning, about ten o'clock, when he had lain

still and apparently lifeless for some hours, a faint, flickering light came into his gray face. His eyes looked far off, far off, and he saw what filled them with a wonderful joy and light, and then his lips parted. He began to speak, but his words were thick and rapid—like people talking as they pass each other."

"Oh, Jack! what did you hear?"

"I heard him say 'Marius' quite distinctly, and, after a short pause, as if in answer to a question, these four words—'*Just before the winter.*' As truly as I live, Virginia, I heard these words in the very voice of Marius. And the voice was neither sad nor weak; it was strong and pleasant, but low and far away. As truly as I live, Virginia, I believe that Marius will return—*just before the winter.*"

She listened to the positive words of the young man with a swift conviction of their truth. As he spoke she raised herself into a sitting posture, her lips parted, her eyes gleamed; she said softly, when Jack ceased speaking, "*Just before the winter!* I will wait for him."

"You will not be disappointed. Trust me, trust God, Virginia. He bringeth all good things to pass." Then Jack went away, but he left a great consolation behind him.

When Major Mason returned home that day, he found the light of this new hope still upon her face. She drew him close to her, and,

holding his hands in hers, repeated what Jack Rhea had said. "Do you believe it, father?"

"With all my soul, Virginia. Last week I visited Mr. Rhea. I saw then that he was at the very verge of this life. We spoke much of Marius, and I told him how the cruel suspense in which his fate was held made you suffer. I think, ere his spirit left this planet for the star of its desire and destiny, it visited Marius. If in dreams the soul can go so far, see so much, and bring back such secret intelligences, how much more in the hour and article of death? He still retained so much power over his clay tool as to speak through its cold lips—the message given, he departed forever."

"I wonder if Marius knew?"

"When he comes, ask him."

The air of certainty with which the Major spoke of this coming was charming. It was like an elixir to Virginia. She would not question it away—"When he comes, ask him." It was evident her father regarded the return of Marius with a positive expectation.

In Virginia's first weeks of suspense she had suffered all the anguish of a soul in revolt. The hard reasoning which would have taught her to accept calmly an inevitable fact, simply because the disappearance of Marius was a fact, and was inevitable, she could not, she would not, listen to. She prayed, she implored God for her lover's return. She had faith in God's

sympathy, and in this loving imploration she continued until her health failed. Then her despair, which had been active, became a somber despondency; her soul secretly and constantly fed on it, and it induced day by day a languor near to annihilation. Continually she traced the same circle, asked the same question, monotonously repeated, without any hope to find an answer.

For it was one of Virginia's misfortunes that she was not permitted to fight out the battle alone. Into an afflicted soul the crowd think they have a right to come; it is like a conquered city. Friends, acquaintances, covert enemies, came to visit her with advices, protestations, concealed reproaches. One said, "Time will bring forgetfulness, and wherever your dear one is, are you sure that he will continue to love you? Are you sure even that, after five or even two years, you will continue to love him?" Such inquiries were worse than death. Jack spoke of the many virtues of Marius. He wept as he counted over his acts of loving-kindness, and Virginia was angry at him for using the past tense. She fancied her long sorrow wearied Jack, who had his living loves to care for.

But worst of all miserable comforters were those who pretended to bring her the consolations of heaven—who told her of a God who must be loved alone, and who jealously broke

all earthly idols—of a God who was angry at any revolt against his will; pious preachers, who went on repeating in a spiritual manner phrases of purest egotism—"What were health and riches, human glory, human science, or even human love? Nothing. Every day brought some wretched example of their failure to give lasting happiness. It was a bad calculation to love any earthly thing; the only infallible calculation was to love God. He never died, he never failed, and he was master of all events." Here was a spiritual logic beyond dispute, and they expected Virginia to believe their report.

But her whole moral nature revolted against it. Her friends might die, might even cease to love her: so much the more would she love them. To detach herself wholly from the creature, and give herself wholly to God, because the creature might not be fully worthy or fully reliable, ah! that was not God's way of loving man! She felt it would kill her spiritually and physically. She said, out of the fullness of her sorrow, "I will not listen to such consolation. If love and life are God's gifts, how can I help weeping when he takes them away? Was it not when God saw Job prostrate with grief because of his bereavements that he said of him, 'My servant Job, who has not his equal upon the earth?'" And until her physical health gave way, she resisted all

spiritual poison; she clung to her faith in God's love, as a child clings closer and closer to the father who is chastising it.

Jack's visit, and the wonderful promise of it, affected her very remarkably. It seemed to suddenly arrest the stealthy undermining of her life by sorrow. And in a few weeks this truce with death was evident. She had visibly gained. She began to forget her own sorrow, and to think of her father's long patience with his darkened days; and when an invalid has progressed thus far, love and care will do the rest.

Nelly was quick to seize every favorable symptom and nurse it, until it nursed the patient. She would not allow that there had been anything remarkable in the old fisherman's message. The circumstance was not a bit uncommon.

"Whya!" she said, with the most matter-of-fact air, "it's a varry common way with Yorkshire folk. There was old Dickie Umpleby—a stubborn soul as iver was—and he wouldn't forgive young Dick, till he got fair out of his body, as it were; then, when they were straightening him for his burying, he whispered, 'I forgive Dick'; and frightened Ann Oddy into a screaming sickness. And Thwaite of Top Farm spoke to his wife when she was kissing him in the parting moment: and what he said no one knew, but it turned Lizzie Thwaite

white as a snow-drift; and she niver smiled at aught again as long as she lived. And a lile lad of Jimmy Hurd's at Beggarmonds, that died on my awn mother's knee, came back a moment with a word of comfort that dried Peggy Hurd's tears and made her feel as if she were a varry happy woman." Then Nelly stopped talking, and began opening and shutting drawers. She wanted Virginia to ask questions—to talk—to feel an interest in some one outside her own life; and she thought she saw some evidence of this condition. In a few moments Virginia said:

"Come here, Nelly, and finish your story. What did that lile lad of Jimmy Hurd's say?"

"You see, Miss, he was the only lad-bairn they had; and his mother thought he hedn't a fault—no more he hed. He was nobbut three years old when he took a fever and just burnt up, as it were, in a day or two; and Peggy Hurd, that hed niver let him out of her sight, was just beside hersen wi' the thought of the poor lile chap in the great heaven, all by himsen. 'T' Hurds hev niver been church-goers,' she said, 'and I niver heard tell of one o' them heving a title clear, or even expecting to go there; and what iver will my poor baby do there? He'll be that lonely—he'll hev no one to kiss and cuddle him, and no one to tak' a bit of care of him'; and then she sobbed for the lonely baby as if her heart would break in-

two. We thought he was quite gone, and Peggy's face was bended o'er him. All of a sudden she stopped crying, and looked with her varry soul at the wee lad, and as sure as you are there, Miss, he opened his eyes a moment, and said, just as soft and sweet as iver was—'God will take care of baby.' Now then, what do you make of that?"

"Oh, Nelly, I think God takes care of us all."

"To be sure he does—dead or alive—he cares for us. And Captain Bradford has nobbut been away a bit over a year. Whitby lads are three and four years away. John Thomas says so. A matter of a year or two, what of that? The captain hes been kept away, I'll be bound, for some good end. Old Mr. Aslin, the Wesleyan preacher, whenever he preached a funeral sermon, said the brother or sister hed been taken from t' evil to come. Varry well, a man can be kept out of evil, as well as taken from it. I'm sure nobody with a mite of sense would want to be a married man in these times—flour eighteen dollars a barrel; coal ten dollars a ton; meat that high one hates the sight of a cow; and——"

"What are you talking about, Nelly?"

"The God's truth, Miss. The Major wouldn't hev you told, but there *hes* been a sight of trouble. Whya! not a week since, there was a big bread riot here in New York City, Miss."

"Nelly! Nelly! And no one told me!"

"I would hev told you, Miss, if the master would hev let me. I think it would hev stirred the life in you, and done you lots of good."

"A riot for bread in New York! Impossible!"

"Not a bit impossible. It were a Monday morning, when women and men worth aught should hev been at their washing, or off to their daily work; but they hev been talking all Sunday about not heving all they wanted, and they felt as if they ought to take it. There hed been a notice put up on Sunday iverywhere, calling all t' ragamuffins together at four o'clock in t' City Hall Park; and they were on hand—you might hev wagered your life they would be. Four o'clock meant night, and night work; any fool should hev known that, but it seems a dispensation of politics to put less than fools in ivery city office. They niver hindered Moses Jaques—the biggest idler of all idlers—from telling t' poor, shivering, senseless crowd around him that they ought to hev flour at their awn price. 'There is fifty-three thousand barrels of flour in Ely Hart's store,' he said; 'let us go and offer him eight dollars a barrel for it, and if he won't take it'—then he stopped and looked at the mob, and they were quick to take the hint. They poured down Dey and Washington Streets, five thou-

sand of them, and soon hed the whole fifty-three thousand barrels on t' pavement."

"What a shame!" She was greatly excited, and Nelly saw with delight a faint color spread over her cheeks and throat.

"Wasn't it a shame? Fifty-three thousand barrels! John Thomas said you could hear the thud of the barrels, thrown from t' upper story, above the shouts of men and the screaming of the women; and when the soldiers did get there the street for far away was knee deep in flour."

"Why did not the mayor, the merchants, the military interfere?"

"Well, Miss, the United States being blest wi' a popilar government, hes to give idlers more than their awn ill way. But if they were to try such doos in Turkey as they put upon decent people here, it wouldn't be long before t' Sultan would nail their ears to t' church doors."

"I am afraid I have been very selfish in my sorrow, Nelly."

"Well, you *hev*, Miss. Sorrow is a child that needs no nursing, and few childer get as much. The master hes hed a sight of trouble lately, and nobody to say a word of comfort to him. I hev been sorry for *him* many a time and oft. And I know he is wanting a bit of pleasure now he will niver take unless you say the word."

"What is it, Nelly?"

"I heard him talking yesterday to Mr. Ketel-tas. Mr. Keteltas thanked the Almighty that terrible old man, President Jackson, would soon be out of his place, and the master said he would be very thankful to God if he could only see him once more while he was in it—and so on they talked; and I could see the master's heart was deep in the matter, but he would niver say a word to you about it; not he!"

"Nevertheless he must go, Nelly. He will be much the better for such a change."

"And you too, Miss. To be sure, you *hev* hed a big trouble; but if you'll count father and home, money and friends, and God's love, to sweeten all, and then reckon things up, you'll agree that the bright side is a long chalk ahead of the dark side."

"Thank you, Nelly. I wish you had spoken as plainly long ago."

"It would hev been no use, Miss. You cannot cross the stile till you come to it; and it was Mr. Rhea's message gave me a license to speak at all."

The result of this conversation was a manifest one. Major Mason went to Washington, and his daughter, wisely guided by Nelly, gained a little strength every day. Indeed, when her father returned, Virginia was able to meet him with much of the demonstrative love she had been used to give; and also to feel a

very pleasant curiosity in the events of the visit.

It had been a delightful one. The Major was quite excited over it, and when he found Virginia ready to listen, he gave her a smile so full of love and gratitude that her heart reproached her severely; and she drew her father's wasted face down to hers, and kissed it fondly, and promised with the kiss to try and accept God's will cheerfully, and wait even so for the promise she hoped in.

"Then I am a very happy man to-night, Virginia. I have my daughter back, and I have had a good visit, spent many pleasant hours with my old friend and comrade."

"You were at the White House?"

"Often. A grand old man is Andrew Jackson! I went there first in the morning. He was alone and smoking. He gave me a pipe, and we talked over the days of our youth together. Then we spoke of Texas, and he leaped to his feet, and glowed like a hot coal, and glorified Houston, and the men who had fought and fallen for our gain, till I felt the hot tears in my eyes, and the trumpet of battle in my ears, and I went to his side and clasped his hand, and we stood still and looked at each other, while the splendid drama passed like a burning thought between us."

"'Faults!' he cried. 'No, sir! these Texans have no faults toward their fellow-men, and

how they stand toward the Eternal is no man's business. Houston has fought splendidly, and refrained himself in the hour of victory, as only a man with the heart of a hero could have done.' After this visit I went often in the evenings and talked with him."

"Does he give many entertainments at the White House?"

"No; he lives in the most modest simplicity. Picture to yourself a large room barely furnished and lit by a chandelier in the center, and at the further end of the room a plain table covered with papers and the President's large chair before it. Here he sits smoking and writing, or listening to Mr. Livingston, the Secretary of State, reading dispatches."

"I have read that he smokes only a pipe."

"A long reed pipe, with a bowl of red clay. A backwoodsman from Tennessee, while I was there, begged it from him, and went home the proudest man in the universe."

"What about the ladies of his family, father? Did you see them?"

"Oh, yes! Mrs. Donelson, Mrs. Andrew Jackson, and Mrs. Livingston were generally sitting around the fire, either reading or sewing. Five or six children, all under seven years of age, played about the room."

"I should think children would trouble the consideration of state papers."

"When they are too noisy, the President

would gently wave his pipe toward them, and Mrs. Donelson rise and check their too rough play. A great old man, Virginia, and carrying the impress of his fine primitive nature. He looked like a patriarch, a monarch, an Indian chief. He is the typical American of an era Time will never bring back."

"Yet no man has been more bitterly abused and condemned. There are many ill charges against him."

"Lies! Let them have time and they will fly on their own wings. One thing is certain; though Andrew Jackson has been abused, no one has ever thought of ridiculing him. Ridicule is the lightning that kills a reputation. Aristophanes was only a comedian, but he had the power to toss his enemies among the populace of a thousand cities for a thousand years. But however much men may blame, no man can find food for ridicule in Andrew Jackson."

"He is old, but he seems to have many to love him."

"He is still young; his heart can never dry up, so many fresh springs run into it."

"Does he speak eloquently?"

"His words are current words, and ring well, and when his voice leaves his lips it goes straight to the heart of the listener."

"You look so happy and so much better, father."

"I have had a good two weeks, Virginia, and the crown of it is in finding you, my child, able once more to share my pleasure."

There is something very compelling in the gentleness and indulgence of an aging father. Virginia's heart ached with the thought that she had darkened one whole year of the few years remaining to him. Whatever she suffered privately, she was resolved in the future to make no shadow in her home. An armed soul could dwell in a feeble body, and unselfishness arms a soul at every point; it has expedients for all necessities, and consolations for all extremities.

As the summer advanced the Major proposed a long visit to Rockaway, and Virginia answered, "Indeed I shall like it, father. We shall see the great ships go in and out, and——"

"And if Marius should come in any one of them——"

"I should know it as he passed me, though there were miles of space between us."

"You think so, you feel so, Virginia; but, as a fact, Destiny loves surprises, and the great events of our lives take us unawares."

So the summer passed not unpleasantly away in spite of business and financial prostration. Indeed, this very year was a time of delirious distress in New York's history. Failures were so numerous that men ceased to number them.

Merchants were gasping for breath, and workingmen, on the point of starvation, were beginning to form protective combinations—a phenomenon so strange in America that it was judiciously pronounced "a European notion, needless and incompatible with our free institutions."

In May there was a general suspension of banks, and the streets were crowded with despairing men and patrolled by troops to prevent rioting. No goods were selling, no business stirring, no houses building, and lots which a year before brought any price for fear they might run away, were now not salable at all. In England, also, everything was tending to a like commercial crisis.

But men learn very soon how to make the best of loss, and, in spite of it, to enjoy the pleasures still remaining. Gradually New York recovered her energy, and when the Major and Virginia returned home in September, there were no signs on the surface of life of the past trouble. Vandenhoff, Forest, and Mr. Wallack were playing in various theaters. Young Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was just surrendering his promenade on Broadway to Keokuk and Black Hawk and their bands of Sauk, Fox, and Sioux Indians; and the glorious fall weather, sunny, cool, and full of cheerful vigor, was flooding the streets with life and hope.

"*Just before the winter.*" These words, so

full of promise, were never long out of Virginia's mind, and their influence, combined with the fresh salt air, had made a great change in her condition. She had been very near the grave, and she had brought back from that mysterious travel marks which time would never quite efface; no, nor happiness; no, nor yet love. But she was now able to take an interest in life, and in some measure to perform its duties. Many thought she had lost beauty and grace; those who saw clearer perceived the rarer delicacy of her bloom, and the refinement of all that was before lovely and womanly in her.

She watched, she waited, she listened even in her sleep. Her life was all attention. And every one in the house shared her vigil, though little allusion was made to it. No sign, however, came to her. September and October passed, and November—though the Indian summer tinged its first days—was gradually taking on the cold, gray lights and darker shadows of approaching winter. One night, as she sat quiet by her father's side, there was a quick knock at the door. Her face flushed, but she shook her head in answer to his look. "It is not the step of Marius." The Major laid down his book and rose to welcome the coming visitor. John Paul Keteltas came hurriedly into the room.

"My friend," he said, "very bad news has

come to me. Nigel Forfar has been murdered, and I must go to my Jane."

"Murdered!"

"By the mother of those four children we saved. This is the end of a bad marriage. I must go to my Jane, who is ill and likely to be a mother again ere I reach her."

"What can I do?"

"There are many things you can do for me, my friend," and he sat down and took several papers from his pocket, and as rapidly as possible explained his desires to Major Mason.

"I ask you to do these things for me," he said, "because I may be some weeks from New York. I shall make an end of all my interests in Tennessee, and bring my daughter back with me. Such changes are not made with a wish and a word."

"What will Jane do with the plantation? Perhaps she may wish to live on it."

"My dear, the plantation is all mine. I own the land and the house and the slaves, big and little. I shall make the slaves free as I am. I shall sell house and land, and divide the money among them."

Then Virginia rose and kissed him, and he continued: "Yes, my dear, I will have none of the price of it, not one dollar. I will give my poor Jane your kiss and your love, and I will look to see you red and fresh as my finest roses are when I come back again."

He did not delay longer. He was full of anxious hurry, and he had the air of a man who is pressed to the accomplishment of some belated duty. His farewell words to the Major indicated it:

"I must go quickly, lest worse come."

The Major could read no longer. He began to walk about the floor and talk to Virginia. "Forfar was a cruel man, but this is a great retribution."

"I have heard you say that crime and punishment grow out of one stem—in this case, how true! Jane will be broken-hearted."

"I think not. The golden image of Jane's love has been long thrown down. Jane will weep for a short time, and then forget. You will see her here soon; her fair hair and fair face showing very handsome in folds and veilings of blackest crape. I trust she may yet have happiness enough to redeem her lost years."

"Father, how can a woman forget her first love?"

"Easily, if her first love teach her the lesson, I know, from what John Paul has told me, that Nigel Forfar took infinite pains to make his wife despise him. He courted her hatred as once he courted her love. Really, he never forgave her the loss of the boys Alexander and Stephen."

"Indeed, father, I was not sure if in that

matter Jane was just and right. A wife should be loyal to her husband."

"Right or wrong?"

"Perhaps. At any rate, if Jane had done her full duty to Nigel, and left the righting of the wrong to God, this deed would have freed the four children without her paying the price she did."

"It was not in Jane's nature to wait. She fought the wrong, and she fought her own misery, from first to last."

"She was small and sandy haired—you know"; and Virginia smiled sadly. "I did not fight, father; I just fell prostrate."

"Against some blows, falling is the only fencing, my dear."

"Poor Jane! She was so sanguine when I last saw her; so anxious to put all wrong right; so full of renewed love for her husband. I think she can never get over such a blow."

"I tell you she will, and I think no worse of Jane because I read her future so. She will return with her father. She will rule the old man absolutely through his grandchildren. The large silent house will soon echo with little feet and voices; and anon Jane will go into society, and be very popular, and much admired. I think she will marry young Van Schaick: he is handsome and very rich, and he told me that if he had not been in Europe when Jane married Forfar, he would have

given the Southerner a harder task to win her. I think he loved Jane truly."

"Then he ought to have said so before he went to Europe. He made Jane miserable many a time. I despise a man who is always arguing a question with himself, and never able to come to a decision."

"It is better to argue a question without deciding it than to decide it without arguing it."

"Not in love, father. To show a warmth that is not to be shared, or even communicated!—nothing is colder."

The subject of Jane's sudden trouble and of her future, was not to be talked away or into the background. Not even Nelly's decided opinions on it could settle the tragedy in Virginia's mind. It kept her waking all night; it filled her mind as she wearily went about her occupations in the morning; it added a kind of gloomy atmosphere to her own delayed hopes and scarcely articulate doubts and fears. The day was dark and rainy; the trees desolated; even her desperate hope could hardly deny much longer the actual presence of winter.

The Major had begun to grow nervous and anxious; he could not endure to sit in the company of such sharp yet dumb inquiry; he felt that even while Virginia talked with him her heart was fluttering with expectation or sick with delay, and that it cost her a great effort

to understand and answer his remarks if there was the slightest unusual movement. This morning he found her especially listless and unsettled, and he determined to go down town and leave her at least that liberty of solitude which her visible suffering asked.

About eleven o'clock Nelly looked into the parlor with a face that at once startled Virginia. "What is it, Nelly? Nelly, what is it?"

"John Thomas, Miss. He wants badly to see you—that is, I want him to tell you a bit of a story he hes heard."

"A story he has heard! Where, Nelly?"

"He took the master to the Exchange, and then master told him not to keep the horses standing in the cold and wet, but to run them back to stable. Well, Miss, he were obeying orders, when Adam Casely hailed him; Adam was able seaman on—the 'Arethusa.'"

"Nelly, what are you going to tell me?"

"John Thomas, come in, and say your say. Don't you be afraid, Miss. John Thomas was niver the one to bring bad news to any one."

John Thomas came shyly in. He was a tall, massive Yorkshire youth, dressed partly like an hostler and partly like a sailor. His scrimp corduroy nethers and big shoes gave him the air of the stable, but he wore a sailor's blouse, with its low, square collar, and his eyes reminded one of the sea. He balanced his hat

firmly between his hands, and was awkward and uncertain, though he looked with an honest, open-faced kindness straight into Virginia's troubled eyes.

"John Thomas, what have you to tell me? Nothing sorrowful—nothing disappointing?"

"Not I, Miss. I'm none of that kind. I couldn't be hired for any amount of brass to bring you bad news. T' long and t' short of it is, I met Adam Casely, and he says that Captain Bradford isn't many knots behind him."

"Now, Miss, don't you take on. Hev a mouthful of wine. There's nothing to cry about." Then, turning to John Thomas—"Go on, my lad! Tell your story straight, if you hev that much mense and sense."

"I said, 'Adam, whativer hes come to the "Arethusa?"' and he said, 'Burned to t' water's edge.' 'Where?' says I. 'In a varry bad quarter northeasterly off Newfoundland, twenty-sixth day of April, 1836.' 'Come, I'll get down and tie my horses,' said I, 'and we'll hev a drink, and tell me all about it,' and he said, 'I will.'"

Nelly looked at him indignantly. "Keep thysen and Adam Casely out of it, will ta? Tell a straight story, now."

"Varry well, then. It was on the morning of the 25th they found fire in the hold, and all that day and night the captain fought it, as if

it was a man to wrestle with. He were black and burned, and he hed the carpenters building a big raft over his head, but he fought it all the same like a madman, niver knowing if the smoke choked or the flame burnt him, till all was hopeless as doom. Then he came on deck, stern and quiet, and ordered ivery one to their places. Four women and two childer he put in the big boat with the first officer, and as many of the passengers as she would hold; others upon the raft. Adam and sixteen men were in the captain's boat, and work enough to save them all, for the fire had got its awn ill way at last; and before the captain left the ship it was a wall of flame about him. No screaming, no swearing, varry little speaking. 'Do this, do that; go now, go there,' was all the captain said, but ivery one was taken safe off."

"And the captain also?"

"Well, Miss, Captain Bradford was the last to leave the 'Arethusa.' She was then swaying about, and crying and roaring like a creature in mortal pain. But though he hedn't a moment to spare, he took the flag in his hands, and lifted it to his lips, and then run it well up, and the fire breezes blew it out, and by the time he hed reached the boat the mizzen-mast and yards were on fire, and the flame caught the stars and stripes; and when the captain saw that, he let his head fall into

his burnt and blistered hands, and began to sob like a little lad."

"Now, Miss! now, Miss! I wouldn't cry if I was you. Whya, I could laugh for varry joy that God Almighty makes such men. Go on, John Thomas."

"I asked Adam what next, and he said, sorrow on sorrow. Till dark the boats kept together, for they were to follow the captain's boat back to Newfoundland, if so be they could make it; but a great fog came up with the night chill, and in the morning they were all alone. Please, Miss, I'd rayther not say anything about the next twelve days. Only the captain and six men lived through them, and they were at death's door when the 'Polly Palmer,' a whaler out of Marblehead, came alongside. By that time the captain was varry bad: the hunger and thirst and fever, and the misery of arms burnt from finger ends to shoulder blades, had left very little life in him. He was quite off his senses, and, Adam said, fretting himself beyond iverything for a little maid he was to hev married."

He stopped a moment and looked at his mistress and at his wife. Virginia stood upright, with dilated eyes and flushed cheeks, and hands firmly grasping the back of a chair. Nelly stood beside her, crying with a frank freeness, more sympathetic, however, than sorrowful. She nodded imperatively to John

Thomas's look of inquiry, and he obeyed its order.

"The captain of the 'Polly Palmer' hed just been married, and he hed a fellow-feeling for his shipmate. Adam says they grew to be varry close friends in all their troubles, and they weren't few, for the 'Polly Palmer' hed little luck that summer, and she pushed a bit too far north, and got shut in by the ice—just packed in it—and a long winter to live through. Some got through it, and some died, and it was well on summer again before the 'Polly Palmer' could stir out of her ice prison, and then her captain hed to load, and the whales off where they shouldn't hev been, and hard to find, and the men trusting all to Captain Marius, who, Adam says, is a whaler beyond iverything, throwing the harpoon as if that was the only business he hed iver hed in his life, and leading the boats and working and loading as if the ship and loading were his varry ransom."

"I know! I know! I know he would be faithful! But, oh! John Thomas, where is he now?"

"He left the whaler at Marblehead, he and his six men, and, as luck would hev it, the 'Sprightly Ann' and the 'Sea Rover' were just ready to lift anchor for New York. Bits of boats both of them, but right enough for coasters, only not able to take all together. So Adam and two of his mates came in the

'Sprightly Ann,' and landed this morning at nine o'clock. Captain Bradford and the other three men are in the 'Sea Rover,' and like enough to be at anchor now—and the trouble all over, Miss, and nothing but a sailor's fortune after all. The sea is a hard mother to her sons, Miss—knocks them about all their lives, and at the long end gives them a grave. Nay, nay, Miss, I'd niver cry for a trouble that is over; it isn't worth the compliment," for Virginia had broken down at last, and was crying for very pride and joy in Nelly's arms.

That wise young woman knew better than to encourage her. She turned first to her husband: "John Thomas, I'd go back to my work, if I was thee;" and then to Virginia: "Come, Miss, you hevn't a minute to spare for crying now. I should think you would like to give some orders about dinner; a man that hes been on a whaler nearly twenty months wants a bit of freshness in his victuals; and I wouldn't hev the captain see me in that gown, if I was you; it is varry unbecoming, and I allays said so."

Nellie had touched the right key. A spirit of pleasant hurry soon filled the house. There was a little culinary discussion, and then Virginia went to her drawers and took out the pretty new dresses that had been made for her bridal, and looked at them with that critical eye which includes another's taste. None of

them seemed so appropriate as one made specially for the sea—a dark blue cloth, with a loose waist falling away slightly from her white throat, where it was closed with a silk kerchief tied in a sailor's knot. Large shell combs held up the coronal of her hair behind, and in front it fell in these soft drooping curls which, whatever the wearers of frizzes and pompadours and bangs may think, are infinitely womanly and enticing.

A soft blush on her cheeks, the very light of love in her eyes. The Major came home for lunch, and before she told him a word of the wondrous story, he read it in her face, her voice, her manner, her dress. And he rejoiced in her joy. With a sweet thoughtfulness, he resolved to go down to the wharf at which the "Sprightly Ann" anchored and wait for the "Sea Rover."

Then Virginia grew restless, anxious, disturbed with her happiness. Movement of some kind became an imperative demand. She went to her room and unlocked the drawer in which her wedding robe had been laid away. She spread out the rich white satin and lace, the long blonde veil, the wreath of white roses, the trimmed gloves, the satin slippers, all the fair adornments she had locked from her sight with such heart-breaking sorrow and disappointment.

She was so occupied with this and kindred

occupations that she suddenly became aware that the short winter afternoon was wearing away into gloom and darkness. Marius had not come. Her father had not returned. A great fear clutched her by the heart. She went hurriedly down-stairs and called Nelly. Nellie put on a bravado of confidence, but Virginia was sure she saw anxiety beneath it.

"Is it late, Nelly?"

"Only getting on to four o'clock. It is early dark now, Miss."

"He has not come, Nelly."

"Wind and tide are beyond counting on, Miss. The wind changed at noon. Tides only come twice a day. He'll be here anon; I shouldn't wonder if master was waiting for him."

But Nelly had caught Virginia's worry. She lit an extraordinary number of candles through the house, and always managed, in placing them, to excuse herself for looking out of the window. When she arranged the parlor lights, Virginia did not speak. She had thrown herself upon the sofa, and clasped her hands above her eyes. All her being was held in suspense. All her strength was strained in the act of waiting. She knew that it was now dark in the street; she could hear the rain splashing on the pavement, and she could hear nothing else. If only the trample of horses would break the silence! If only she could

hear a footstep! Oh, any footstep would be easier to endure than none.

Nelly was cross with anxiety and disappointment. "Men were always that way. An aggravating set. Never coming when they were wanted; always in the way when they were not wanted. The Major, too, loitering out-of-doors at this hour. I'll give John Thomas a dressing," she muttered, and, with the unjust threat on her lips, she opened the front door to take another look down the dim, wet street.

She drew herself up with a quick gasp. There was a man in a sailor's dress opposite. He crossed the street rapidly, he took the steps at a bound, he held Nelly by both shoulders, and, half laughing and half crying, said:

"Nelly, Nelly, can I go in?"

She pointed to the parlor door. He opened it swiftly, silently, and in a moment he was kneeling by Virginia's side. He had his arms under and around her. He was kissing the sobbing cries of joy from off her lips. His thirsty eyes were drinking deep draughts of love from her eyes. His ears were filled with the music of her voice, and his whole soul spoke in the short, glad words with which he answered all her longing and all her hopes:

"My love! my life! my wife!"

THE END.

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